1845

MONTPELIER, OHIO

1976

HARDW R
FURNIT R

AMERICAN REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL
1776-1976

1845 Montpelier-Ohio 1976

1776 United States of America 1976

This booklet presented for sale by the Montpelier Bicentennial Committee commemorates our country's 200th birthday as a nation and Montpelier's 131st year as a village.

Michael Arbuthnot of Montpelier, Production Manager of the Steuben Printing Company, Inc. of Angola, Indiana, supervised its publication.

Mrs. Jacquelyn Jean (Youse) Whetro wrote the history and feels her roots are deeply set in the area as her lineage traces back to the early settlers. She is a descendent of George Bible of Superior Township, Jacob Youse of Pulaski Township, Chandler Holt of Bridgewater Township and Mary E. Hillard, granddaughter of John Vaus, an early pioneer in Brady Township.

She was born and raised in Montpelier and now resides with her husband, Ronald and children Suzette and Meric, a half mile west of Montpelier.

She wishes to take this opportunity to thank the many people who were so generous with their time, information and old photographs. Many hours were spent reserching old Montpelier newspapers and in many instances, a date preceding a story, indicates it came from the Montpelier newspaper. The history primarily covers the period from the early 1800's to the 1900's.

As in every undertaking of this nature, someone or something is inadvertently omitted, but it was not intentional. The facts are accurately stated to the best of her knowledge.

Following is an alphabetical listing of people and publications from which information or photographs were obtained.

CONTRIBUTORS

- Betty Allman
- Mr. & Mrs. Chester Bible
- Mr. & Mrs. Carl Bohner
- Mrs. Oda Boone
- Ethel Bowen
- Chalmer Burd
- Mrs. Nancy Byers
- John Courtney
- Mr. & Mrs. Otha Cunningham
- Mrs. Catherine Dunlap
- George Haverstock
- Mrs. Janet Hern
- Mrs. Ina Hillard
- Kermit Hillard
- Mr. & Mrs. Martin Holt
- Mrs. Dale Humphrey
- Robert (Jum) Kunkle
- Mrs. Grace E. Lyons
- Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Montgomery
- Montpelier Library personnel
  - Mrs. Shirley Cameron
  - Mrs. Mae Geesey
  - Mrs. Sally Priest
- Mrs. Judy Moore
- Leo Naylor
- Keith Porter
- Guy T. Priest, Sr.
- Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Prosser
- Mrs. Pauline Rundell
- Mrs. Helen Taylor
- Mrs. Ilene Taylor
- William Taylor
- Mrs. Elva Tedrow
- Mr. & Mrs. Paul Underwood
- Alice Ward
- Mrs. Mae Whetro
- Howard Wilson
- Mrs. Billie Winzeler
- Charles & Genevieve Youse
- Mr. & Mrs. Terry Youse
- Goodspeed's History of Williams County 1882
- Howe's History of Ohio
- Keith Porters many articles On Montpelier
- Montpelier Newspapers
- Shinn's History of Williams County 1905
- Van Gundy's Stories of the Fountain City
- Vignettes of Bryan

Bicentennial Committee Members

- Michael Arbuthnot
- Mrs. Marion Breininger
- Mrs. Terry Brown
- Ned Calvin
- Wayne Dean
- Robert Easler
- William Echler
- Paul Hutchinson
- Mrs. Betty John
- Rev. Timothy Johnson
- Charles Koch
- Gary Rockey
- Mrs. Pauline Rundell
- Mrs. Jacquelyn Whetro
- Mrs. Billie Winzeler
- Mrs. Barbara Zulch

1874 Atlas Patron's Directory and their date of settlement

Allen, John-Druggist-1847
Bothwell, Sam C.-Dry Goods-1862
Champion-Hardware & Agricul. Impl'nts-1844
Daniels, W.H.-Lumber Mill & Sickle Sharpener-?
Dunlap, T.L.-Hardware-1844
Ford, James-Mnfr. of Boots & Shoes-1866
Fry, N.E.-Hotel-1862
Gibbens, Andrew-Carpenter & Joiner-1845
Hilborn, Wm. H.-Groceries-1839
Kriebel, J.D.-Notary Public-1861
Lattanner, Adam-Hardware-1845
Leu, Jacob Bros.-Dry Goods, Boots & Shoes-1865
Lesnet, John-Photographer-1851
Lamb, F.E.-Hardware & Agricul. Impl'nts-1863
Lowry, Oscar-Dry Goods & Gen'l Mer.-1868
Manon, Jacob-Farmer & J.P.-1842
Mott, C.C.-Butcher & Stock Dealer-1857
Snyder, J.B.-Lumber Mill & Sickle Sharpener-1872
Snyder, I.M.-Physician & Deal. Real Estate-1836
Sloat, F.-Harness & Saddles-1837
Shaffer, P.B.-Saddler & Harness Mnfr.-1866

Montpelier 1882 experiencing rapid growth

2 grist mills
saw mill
stave factory
oar factory
wheelbarrow factory
foundry & machine shop
ashery
cabinet factory
machine & repair shop
printing shop
3 boot & shoe shops
2 wagon shops
grain elevator
lumber yard
3 grocery stores
2 drug stores
2 jewelry stores
ready-made clothing store
3 millinery stores
photograph gallery
merchant taylor
bank
several boarding houses
2 hotels
undertaker
4 physicians
2 dentists
lawyer

3 dry goods & general merchandise stores
agricultural machine establishment

2 establishemnts that manufacture copper, sheet iron, tinware & roofing

Village Incorporated-1875
Elected Officials

Mayor-J.D. Kriebel
Clerk-Jacob Leu
Treasurer-John Allen

Marshall-Jesse Blue
Judges of election-F.L. Speaker
N.E. Fry and W. M. Gillis

VILLAGE OFFICIALS-1976

Mayor-Wayne Dean
Clerk-Treasurer-Betty Allman
Chief of Police-Raymond Fisher
Village Administrator-Paul Hutchinson

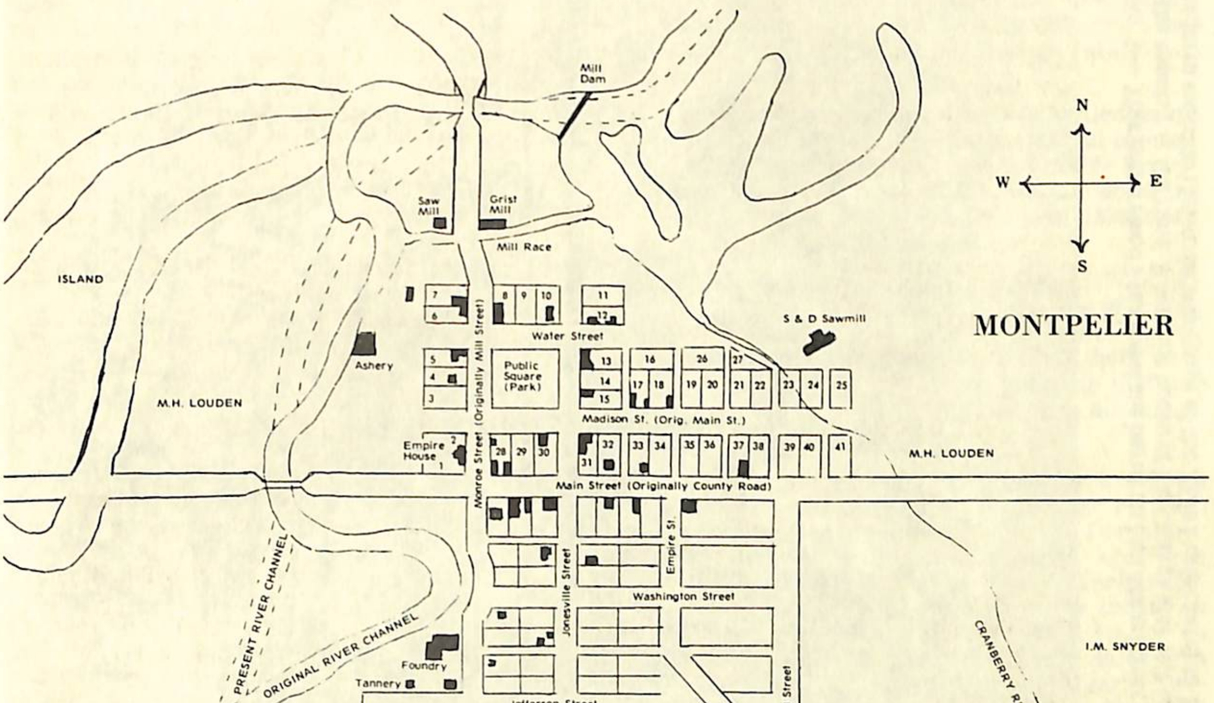
COUNCIL-1976

David Anderson
Donald Gray
Ferm Kepler
William Shatzer
Richard Wright
Jerry Zulch

SCHOOL BOARD-1976

Dr. Walter Bumb, President
Kathryn Northrup, Vice President
Dr. Don Adams
James N. Miller
Larry R. Martin
Marva Whitney, Clerk

J. Roderick Rice, Superintendent
Charles Koch, High School Principal
Darold Figgins, Middle School Principal
Robert Storrer, Primary School Principal
Ralph Sawmiller, Supt. of Transportation and Building & Grounds Maintenance


Mill Dam
N
W
E
S
Saw Mill
Grist Mill
Mill Race
ISLAND
S & D Sawmill
MONTPELIER
Water Street
Ashery
Public Square (Park)
M.H. LOUDEN
Madison St. (Orig. Main St.)
Empire House
M.H. LOUDEN
Main Street (Originally County Road)
Monroe Street (Originally Mill Street)
Jonesville Street
Empire St.
Washington Street
PRESENT RIVER CHANNEL
ORIGINAL RIVER CHANNEL
CRANBERRY RUN
I.M. SNYDER
Foundry
Tannery
Broad Street
Jefferson Street
SNYDER
School
UB Church
Angling Road
Methodist Church
Ohio Street
Laurence Street
Mill Street
SOUTH MONTPELIER
Bryant Street
Platt Street
Boone Saw Mill
I.M. SNYDER
Oar Works Office
J.D. KRIEBLE
J.D. KRIEBLE
1
2
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ORIGINAL TOWN PLAT LOTS 1-41

DIRECTORY OF LOTS IN 1864

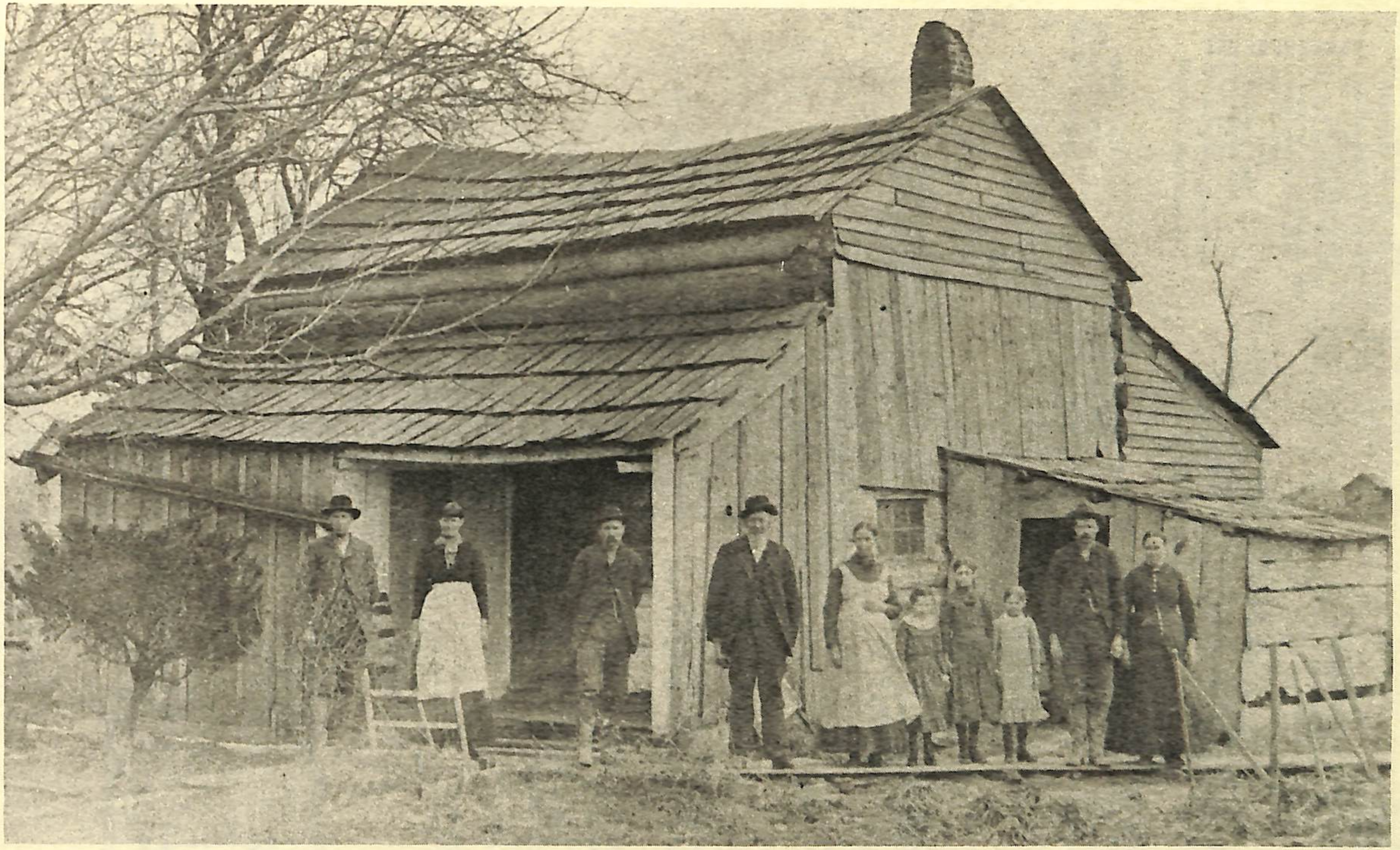
Lot 6-Mallory's General Store (1st-1846)
Lot 7-Varn's Tin Shop
Lot 8-Varn's General Store
Lot 10-Stauffer Dry Goods
Lot 12-Dr. I. M. Snyder
Lot 13-Platt & Crissey
Lot 15-Sisson Cabinet & Chair Maker
Lots 28, 29 & 30-J.P. Platt Store and Post Office
Lot 31-J. Haep Miller
Lot 32-J. T. Platt
Lot 33-Mrs. Pratt
Lot 37-Mrs. Hayhurst

SOUTH SIDE OF MAIN STREET

Harness Shop
Speaker's Blacksmith Shop
Wagon Wheel Shop

OTHER

S & D Sawmill - 1873
Good Mill (Boone Mill) - 1870
Oar Factory - 1882



No. 1 — This home stood near the state barns on east Main Street and was in the country at the time. It was the home of Eli Canaga (far left in photo). The farm extended from the west edge of the Ellis Porter farm to Fairview Avenue. Circa 1874. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Janet Hern, great granddaughter of Eli Canaga.

HISTORY OF MONTPELIER, OHIO

By Jacquelyn Jean Whetro

Montpelier is located on the banks of the St. Joe River. It is the only village in Superior Township in the County of Williams. Early settlers described the area along the St. Joe as "o'erspread with stately elms and massive sycamore with trellises of hanging grape vines running from tree to tree. The beauty and grandeur is surpassed by none in all this region."

In April 1820, the Ohio General Assembly formed 14 counties north of the Greenville Treaty Line and Williams County, then as now, was located in the northwest corner.

Williams County was named after David Williams, a native of New York state. Williams, along with John Paulding and Isaac Van Wert, was instrumental in the capture of Major Andre of the British Army. Major Andre, under orders from his superiors, was secretly dealing with the American General Benedict Arnold for the betrayal of the American fort at West Point. After the war, the three men were honored by having counties named after them.

Northwestern Ohio was the last territory settled in Ohio. Williams County was originally larger and included parts of Defiance and Fulton Counties. It was swampy wilderness which made it undesirable to early land speculators and settlers. The early pioneers that settled and cleared the land were a special breed of men to have endured the swampy wilderness. It is said that many were Pennsylvania Dutch decendents and undaunted by the presence of so much water.

To realize the extent of the marshy land, it is necessary to understand that only through the splendid system of open ditches and tiles was the land reclaimed and made available for cultivation.

Goodspeed states that between 1872 and 1882, some 60 or 70 ditches were built in the county. In 1882 there were 20 tile factories in the county selling tile as fast as it could be produced. The constant opening of new and old lands to the action of the sun contributed to the decline of malaria, a dreaded illness that took the lives of many early settlers.

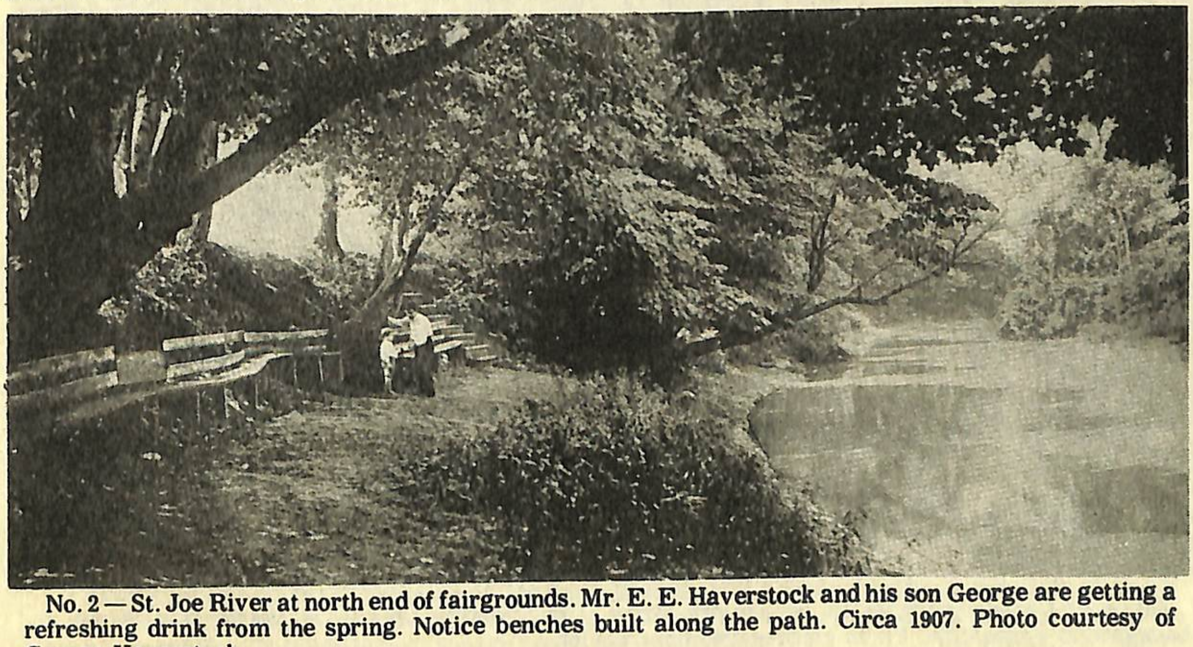
No written record exists as to the first settler in Superior township. Thus when the first county history was written by Goodspeed in 1882, much was recorded from memory of the oldsters rather than from documental records.

George Bible was reputed to have settled in the year 1834 and built his cabin about two and one-half miles southeast of Montpelier (George Bible Park). George Wisman settled in 1836 on land adjoining Bibles. It is presumed that by the year 1839, there were 10-12 families living therein.

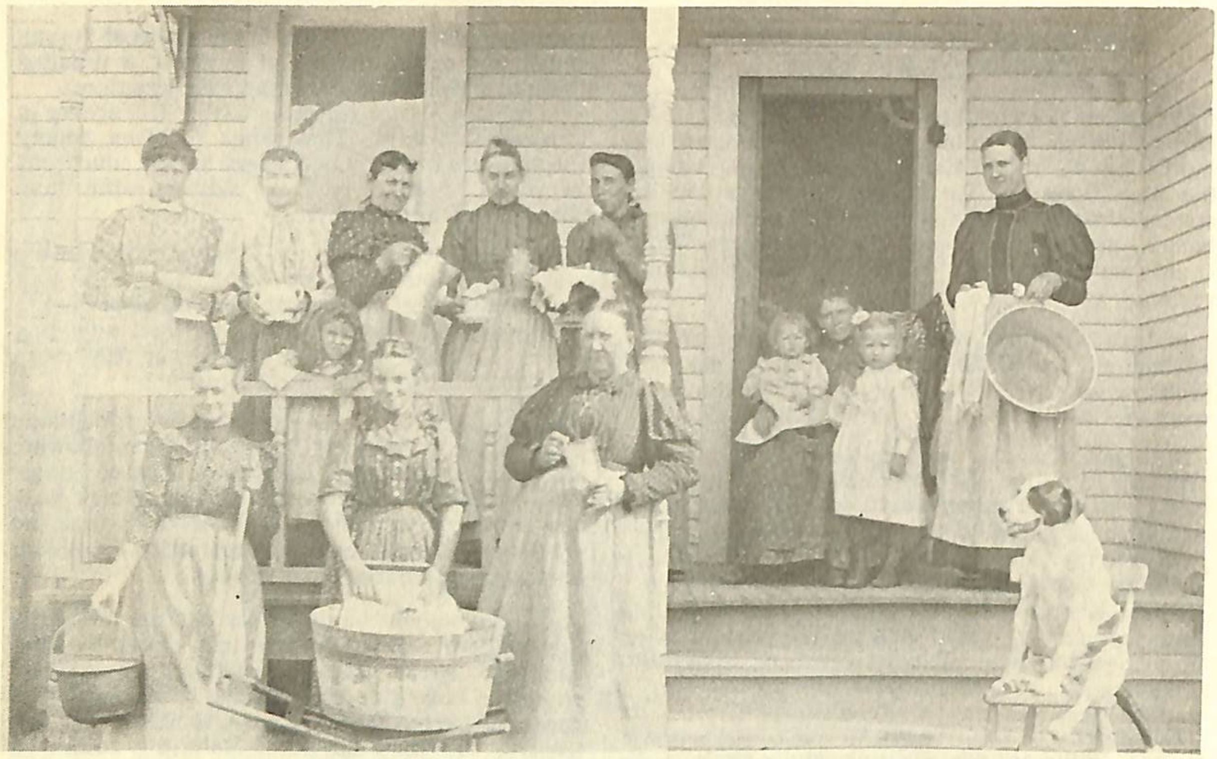
At a session of the Commissioners of Williams County, held at Defiance June 3, 1839, the following proceedings were had: "Upon the petition of George Bible and others, the board order that there be a new township formed." It is believed that the petitioners thought the area superior to all others, thus the name Superior Township.

An article giving us a glimpse into the life of the first settlers was referred to this writer by Mrs. Judy Moore. Her great-grandfather H. Dorshimer wrote the article entitled "Sixty Years Ago" that appeared in the February 17, 1898 Montpelier Enterprise. He was a boy when his family settled on the land east of the Ace Corners (20A & Rt. 15) on the south side in 1838. The Dorshimer name was well known in Montpelier as one of the early merchants as a brother, Jacob, opened a drug and grocery business in the village in 1876. Following is a portion of the article.

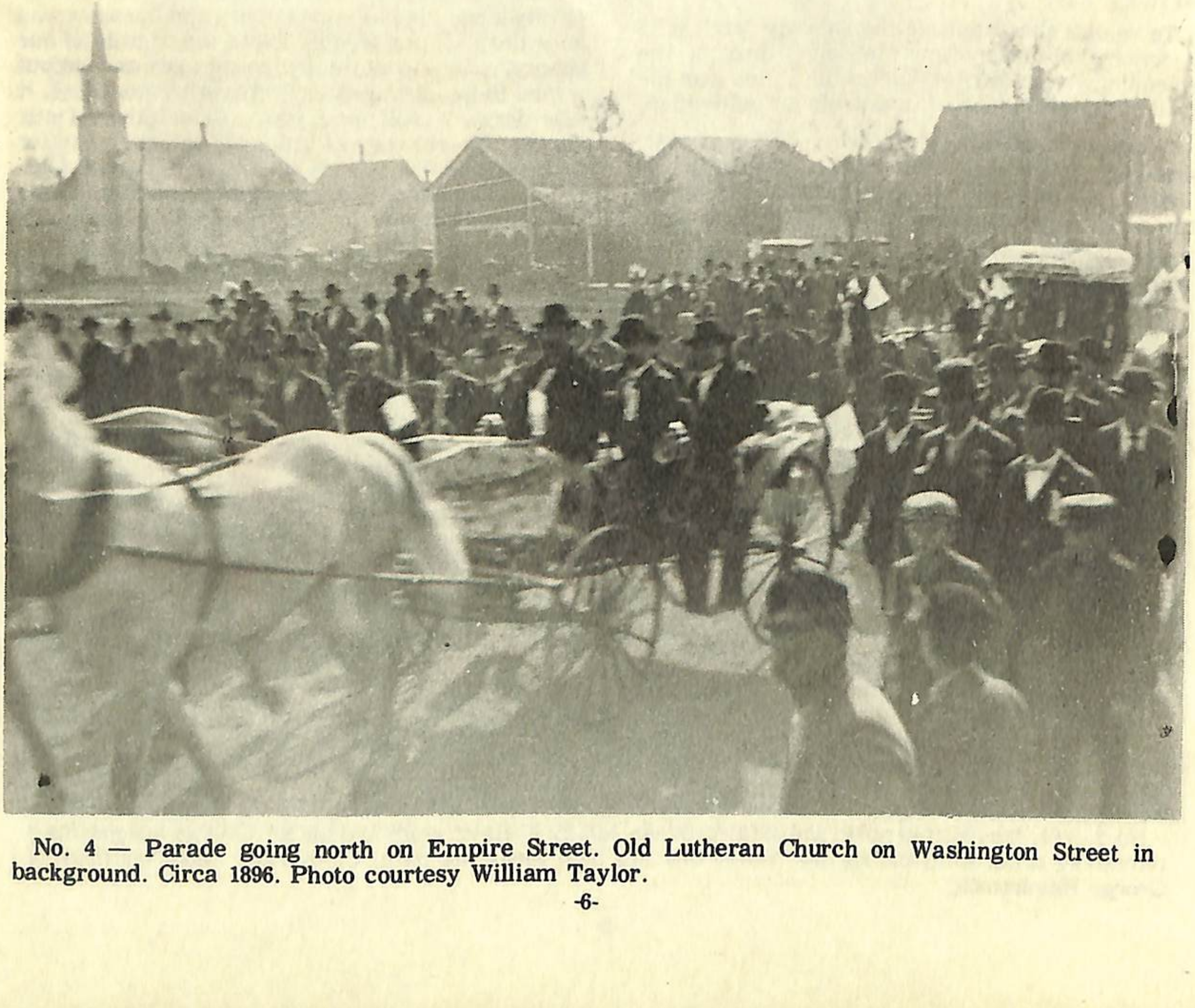
"Sixty years ago last Monday the Dorshimer family landed in Williams County and the snow was knee deep. When we got within a half mile of our shanty, we had to stop and take our axes and cut out a road to get to the shanty. When we got there, it was dark. I will give you a description of our shanty. There was just brush enough cut away for to draw in the logs. They were just the green logs, put up and notched down, a clapboard roof on, a hole cut in the south side for a door, one in the north side



No. 2 — St. Joe River at north end of fairgrounds. Mr. E. E. Haverstock and his son George are getting a refreshing drink from the spring. Notice benches built along the path. Circa 1907. Photo courtesy of George Haverstock.



No. 3 — Getting ready for threshers - approxmiately 1897. L-R backrow - unknown, Mrs. Sarah (Hanneman) Cunningham, unknown, Emma (Gilcher) Long, Caroline (Stelzer) Rockenfelder, Laura (Lee) Gilcher holding Carmy (Gilcher) Green and other daughter Lottie (Gilcher) Battershell, Addie (Weaver) Gilcher. Girl leaning on rail unknown. Front row - Mrs. Mart (Kate) Bible, Mrs. Frank (Martha) Bible, Mrs. Sarah Bible. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Grace E. Lyons, daughter of Addie Gilcher. Taken at home of the Frank Bibles located 1¼ miles SE of Montpelier.



No. 4 — Parade going north on Empire Street. Old Lutheran Church on Washington Street in background. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy William Taylor.

for a window, no chimney and no floor. The house wasn't chinked, nor daubed, just the green logs built up.

The man that hauled a load for us, drove three horses on his wagon and when we got here, he unhitched his horses and tied two in the northeast corner of the house, and one in the southeast corner and we built a fire in the center of the house on the ground and there mother cooked supper for us. We made our beds along the west side of the house. There we were overnight, horses and all. The next morning, our man hitched up and started back east.

There we were in the dense wilderness, with no feed for our stock. We brought along cattle and hogs. Father wended his way through the crooked roads to Defiance, and bought corn for 90 cents a bushel and that was mouldy. Mother would boil a certain amount every day and then divide it out among the stock, so each critter got its share and father took his ax and went to cutting down timber, so the cattle could brouse.

Thus we went along till the first of March, then the snow went away. After that we had plenty of feed, for the swails were full of good grass, and cattle lived well. Hogs got fat, for there was plenty of shack, such as acorns, hickory nuts and beechnuts. People had more than they would consume. Dressed pork sold as low as 2 cents per pound.

Indians were quite plenty here 60 years ago. They would travel from place to place in the spring of the year, and camp down and make maple sugar. Wolves and bear were quite plenty when we came here and deer and wild turkey were in abundance and there were more black and gray squirrels than you could shake a stick at.

Roads, we had none, when we came here. When we wanted to go any place, we took our ax and cut a road as we went. For some time after we moved here, there wasn't many places to go to; it was nothing but work and clear land."

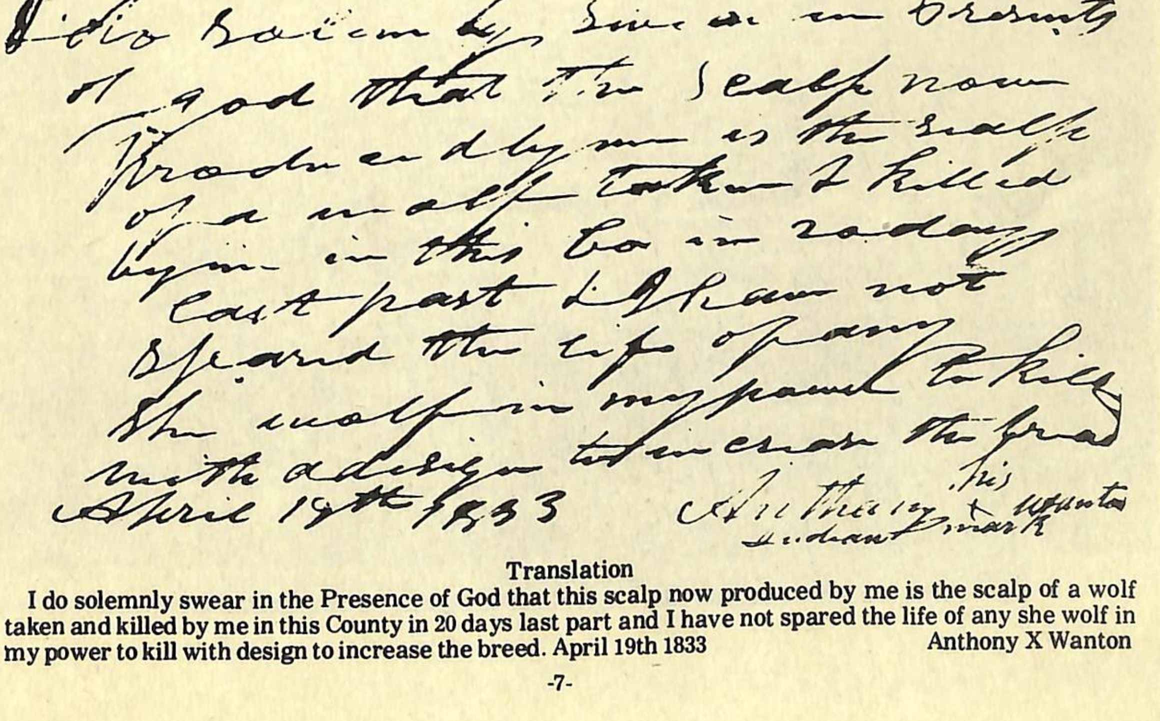
Shinn's history states that in 1842, Charles Brundydge from New York State exchanged 55 acres of woodland which he had cleared and improved, for 160 acres of unimproved land in Superior Township. When Brundydge settled in the township, he was the only settler located on the bottom lands of the river. His land was situated west of the present site of Montpelier, past the river on the north side of Route 107.

Jacob Snyder and William Crissey owned a small store and ashery on the Brundydge farm and it was known for years as Tuckertown. Keith Porter, local historian, told this writer that an angling road, part of which is still used, ran into our present Route 107 at about the location of the Dene Richmond home west of Montpelier. He believes this was the location of Tuckertown. The ashery was later moved to Montpelier as one of the first businesses. It was located on the river bank at the west end of Water Street on the south side. It was still in operation in 1905 but considered one of the oldest landmarks in town by then.

The Montpelier area was heavily timbered with white elm, beech, ash, 5 varieties of oak, walnut and buckeye to name a few. Several types of undergrowth were elder, black haw, and sumac.

Wild animals such as bobcat, panther and deer roamed the forests, but bear and wolves were the most dreaded. Wild game and waterfowl were abundant thanks to the conservative policies of the Indians who killed only enough for food and clothing.

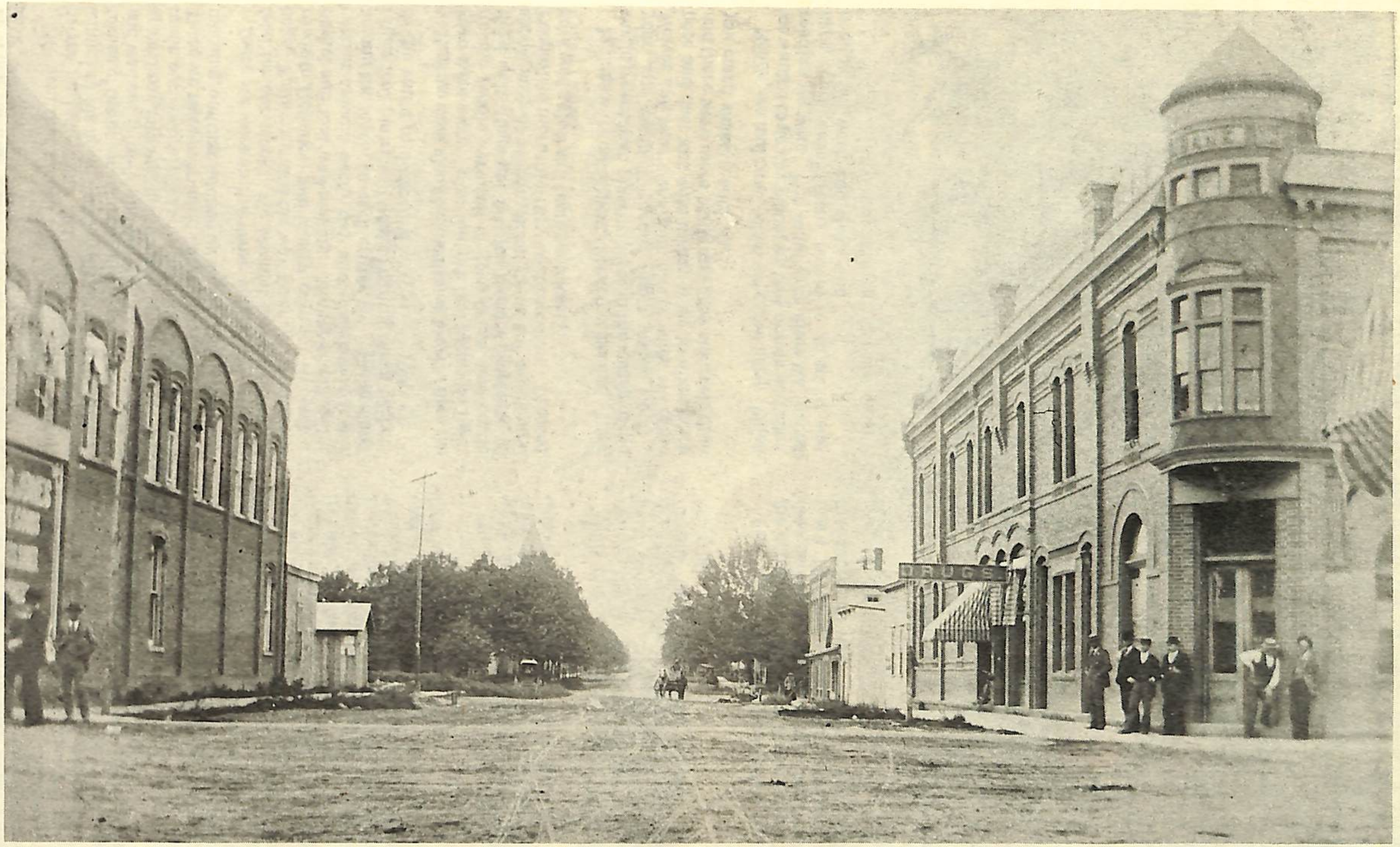
Proof that the Indians were here can be seen by the copy herein of a wolf bounty signed by the Indian and dated April 19, 1833. Notice the X as his mark. The Indian had to sign the bounty note stating that the scalp was actually a wolf scalp.



I do solemnly swear in Presents
of God that the scalp now
produced by me is the scalp
of a wolf taken & killed
by me in this Co in 20 days
last past & I have not
spared the life of any
she wolf in my power to kill
with a design to increase the breed
April 19th 1833 Anthony his X mark Wanton
Indian

Translation

I do solemnly swear in the Presence of God that this scalp now produced by me is the scalp of a wolf taken and killed by me in this County in 20 days last part and I have not spared the life of any she wolf in my power to kill with design to increase the breed. April 19th 1833 Anthony X Wanton



No. 5 — One of the oldest photos of early Montpelier taken at corner of Main and Empire Street looking south. Circa 1890's. UB Church steeple visible above the trees on the east side of the road. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.

The terrible winter of 1837-38 (some sources believe it was the early 1840's) with months of subzero weather, exhausted all food supplies. Nearly two-thirds of the Indian population and scores of white settlers died. Many Indians moved westward as soon as weather permitted which greatly reduced the Indian population thereafter. However, during the 30 years that Montpelier remained only a crossroads, some Indians remained in this vicinity as is attested to by the stories passed down through generations and repeated herein.

Many stories were told of the Indians coming around for handouts. John Courtney, a Wisman descendent, told this writer that an Indian called Bumbee Isaac came on a regular basis to the George Wisman cabin. The Wismans had twin boys, one a red head which Bumbee didn't like because of the color of his hair. The Indians called the bread given them by the white settlers "yankee bread" and thought they were being cheated because of the air holes in it.

Carl Bohner told that as a boy he loved to listen to his grandfather, Jacob Echler, tell stories of the Indians camped along the banks of the St. Joe where the cemetery is now located. His grandfather told of coming to the grist mill each spring and fall with his father and many other farmers. At least a week was required and they camped out while waiting for their flour and meal to be ground. The young boys, when tired of frolicking, would sit and watch the Indians go up and down the river in their canoes.

George Haverstock recalled stories told him of the Indians having a platform in a tree that they would perch in and shoot deer as they wandered in the swamp west of Montpelier. (This area was a continuation of the river bottoms and lies back of the row of homes (residence of this writer) that are on the north side of Route 107 west of town.) He said at one time there was a big hollowed out stone in the area that was used by the Indians to grind meal. The stone was dynamited and used as foundation for the barn on the Dene Richmond farm west of town. He also recalled that as a young man, he helped level 2 large Indian mounds that were located on the south side of Route 107 in a field just west of town.

History seems to indicate that the white settlers, upon arrival in this area, found the Indians to be friendly and more of a nuisance than anything.

* * *

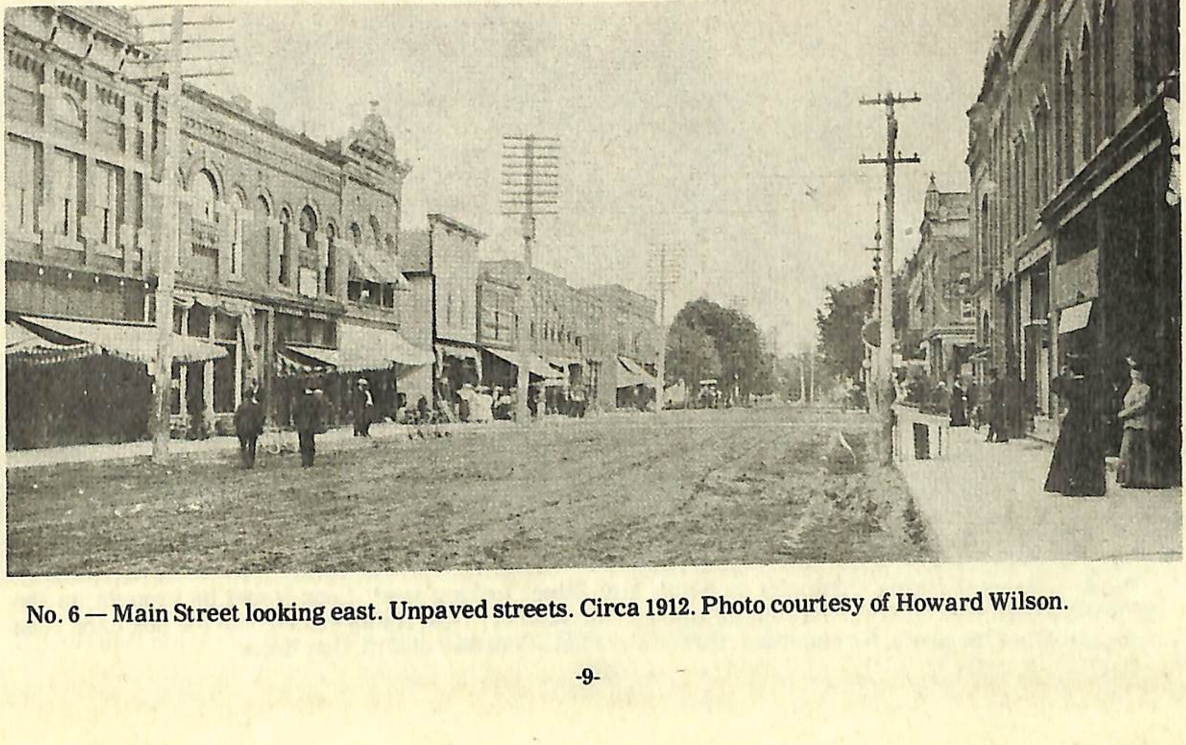
The commercialization of hunting and trapping, the clearing of the forests, the drainage of the swamps and the continuous influx of settlers caused the disappearance of game animals. Otter, beaver, raccoon and fox pelts had provided a medium of exchange for early settlers as money was almost non-existent.

The rivers and streams were important to the early settlers as they contained all species of native fish. They were also a means of transportation and a necessity for industry.

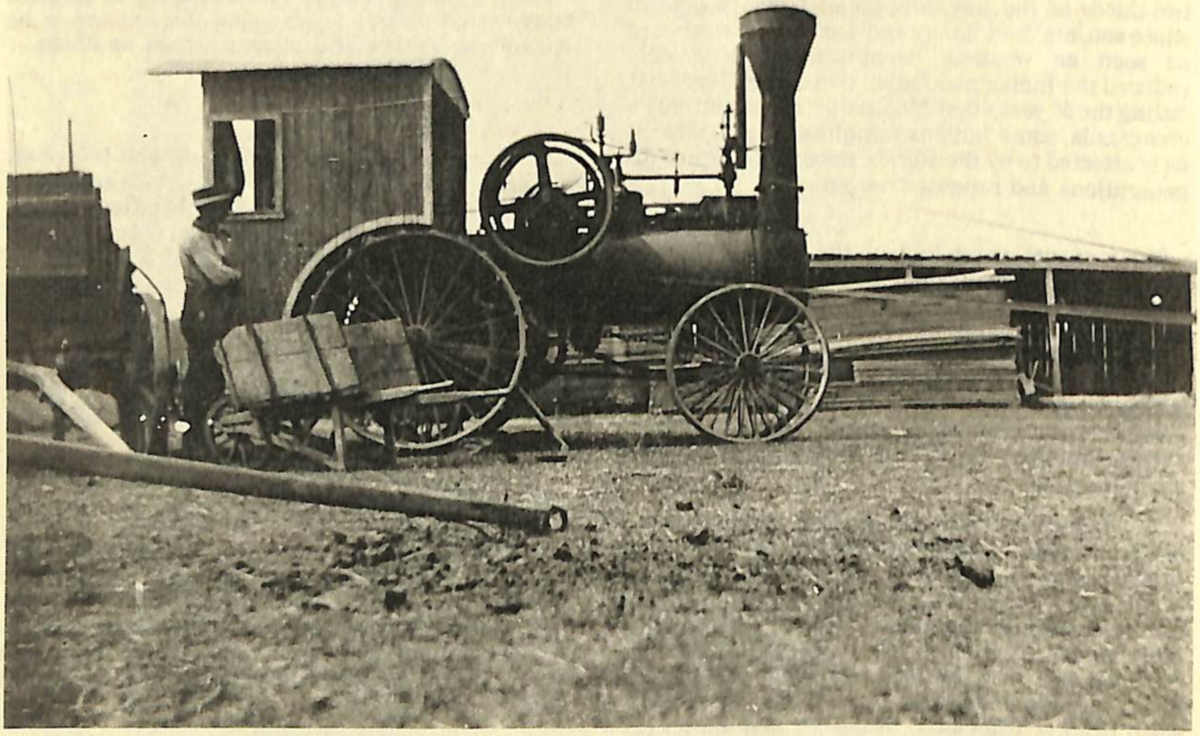
The early settlers, anxious to have a saw mill, constructed a mill race from the point just north of the NE corner of the Leader Enterprise Building (325 N. Jonesville) to the river where it ran south. It is believed it was built about a year before Montpelier was platted. The dam was located a short distance east of the present north bridge site. (See map) Workers helping construct the mill race were paid 25c per day.

There was a narrow neck of land separating the river at the point where the bend is now located at the site of Barnard's Electric (343 N. Monroe). Early settlers cut a channel across this narrow neck of land with horses and scoops and by diverting the course of the river, left a bayou, the traces of which are clearly in evidence today.

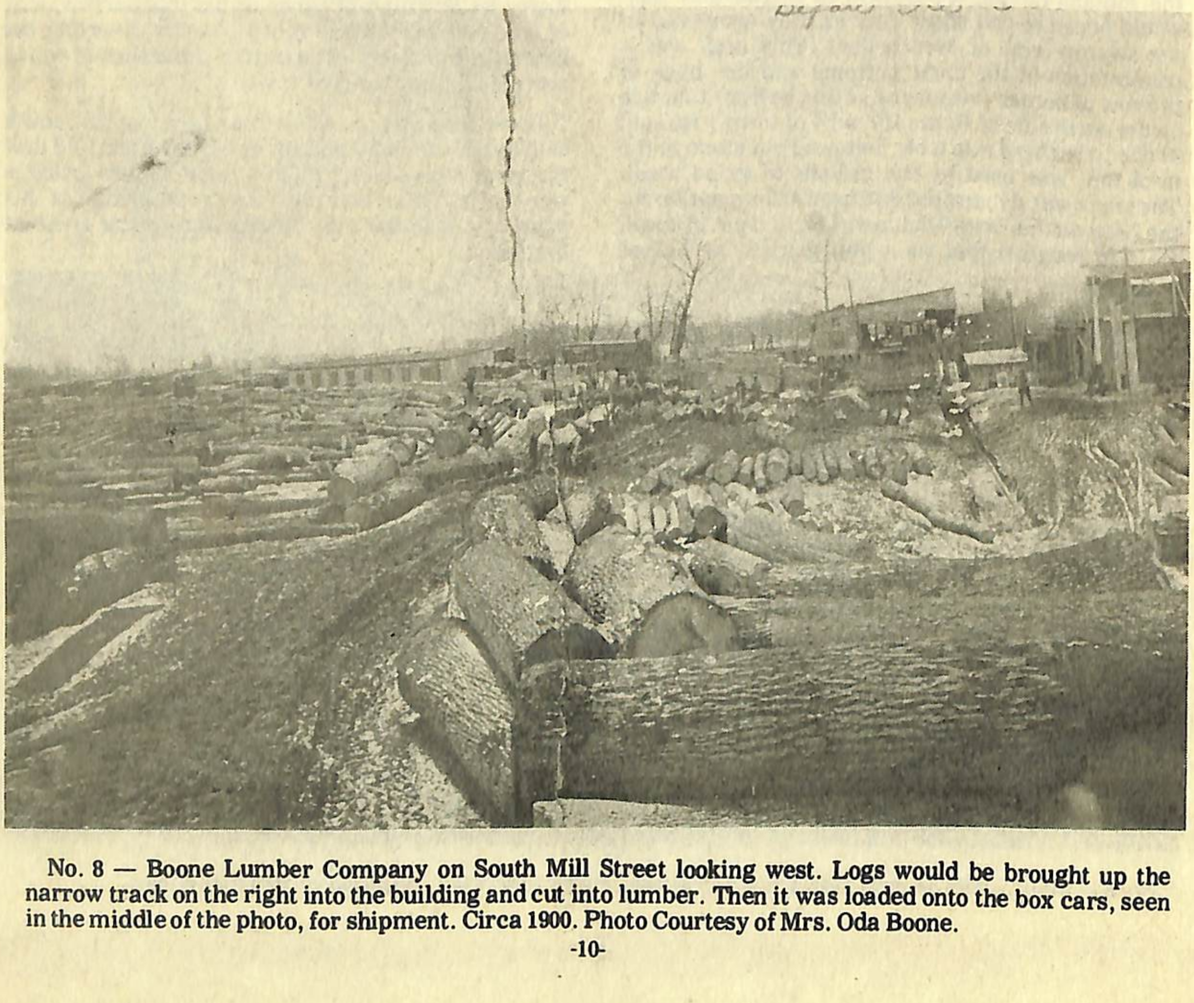
There was a sand bar across the river just south of the above mentioned spot and it has been told that the river was forded at this point before bridges were built. There was once a wooden bridge at this point and was the only bridge across the river at that time.



No. 6 — Main Street looking east. Unpaved streets. Circa 1912. Photo courtesy of Howard Wilson.



No. 7 — Steam engine working at sawmill - presumedly Boone mill. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.



No. 8 — Boone Lumber Company on South Mill Street looking west. Logs would be brought up the narrow track on the right into the building and cut into lumber. Then it was loaded onto the box cars, seen in the middle of the photo, for shipment. Circa 1900. Photo Courtesy of Mrs. Oda Boone.

Goodspeed states that in 1844, a saw mill was in operation on the St. Joe River. This mill was built by Tucker and Hueston and located on the west side of Monroe Street (then called Mill Street) on the mill race. (See map)

An 1864 map shows that the saw mill had been changed to steam although it stood at the same location with B. Gorsuch the owner. In 1874, this mill was discontinued.

Another early saw mill was owned and operated by Jacob Good. His mill was established in 1870.

In 1873, Jacob Snyder had opened a business and was engaged in milling and lumber. April 1, 1881 - "work is crowding our saw mills to such an extent that J. Snyder finds it necessary to dispense with the 10 hour system and to extend the running of his mill into the silent shades of night." In 1882, he was credited with the largest in the place. Mr. Daniels joined Snyder and they continued in business for a number of years. They platted an addition together. Their mill was located on the north side of Cranberry Run, directly north of the present water tower. It was a two story building and the north side had a lean-to from which a wheelbarrow department operated. The mill did a good business and the owners even provided several wagons for use by the people that sold them logs. By 1892, the mill was discontinued. (See map - S&D sawmill)

The Boone Lumber Company was started by C. H. Boone and his brother W. S. Boone in 1886. They subsequently purchased the Jacob Good Mill. In prime years, it employed 60 people including log haulers, timber cutters and the men in the saw mill and lumber yard. Their source of timber was acquired from either buying land for resale after cleared of timber or just buying the timber content. Logs were hauled by wagons, horses and sleds in the wintertime. A fire completely destroyed the lumber yard around 1914 and it was rebuilt. A few years later, the large lumber shed and all contents were burned again. The sawmill was discontinued in the 1930's and a retail business continued until it was sold at auction in 1974. It remained in the same family and same location in the 600 block of Mill Street all these years. (See photo No. 8)

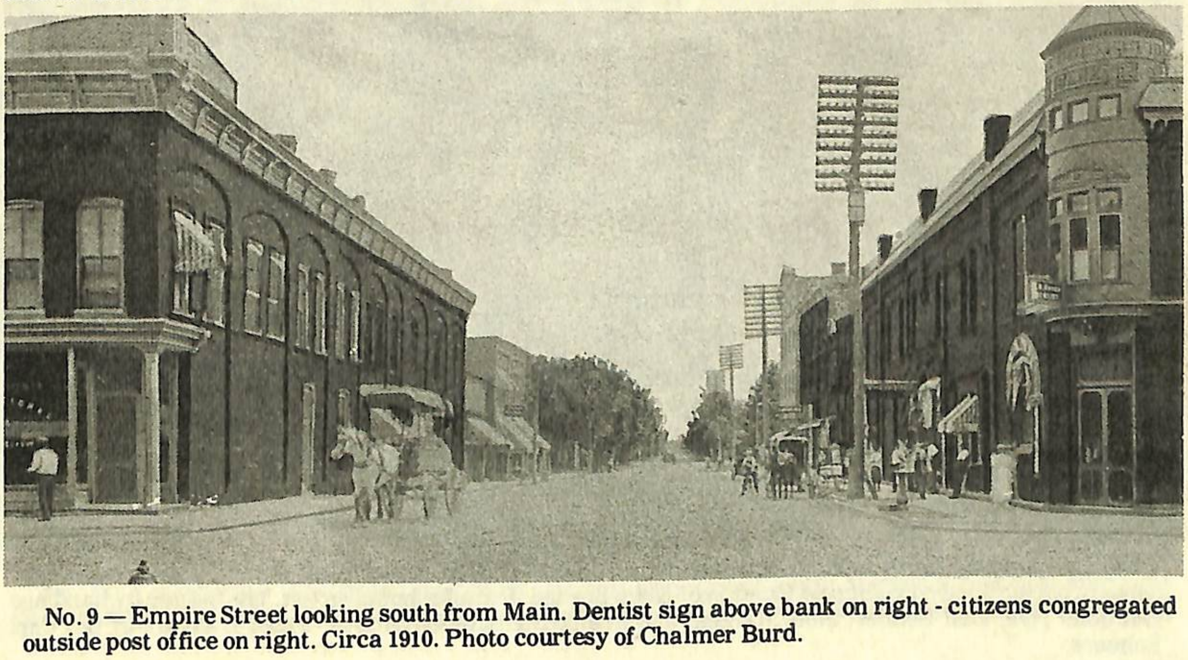
About a year after the first saw mill was built, Tucker and Bryner, co-founders of Montpelier, erected a grist mill across the street from the saw mill. Both were operated by water power on the same mill race.

In 1787, the Congress of the U. S. declared "all navigable waters leading to the Mississippi and St. Lawrence Rivers and their tributaries shall be common highways and forever free." However, the convenience of the mills so outweighed the problems that it was years before the farmers objections caused the removal of the dams. At low tide the dam did seriously interfere with the movement of water craft and at other times it caused flooding. But it wasn't until steam was introduced that the farmers began to resent the inconvenience.

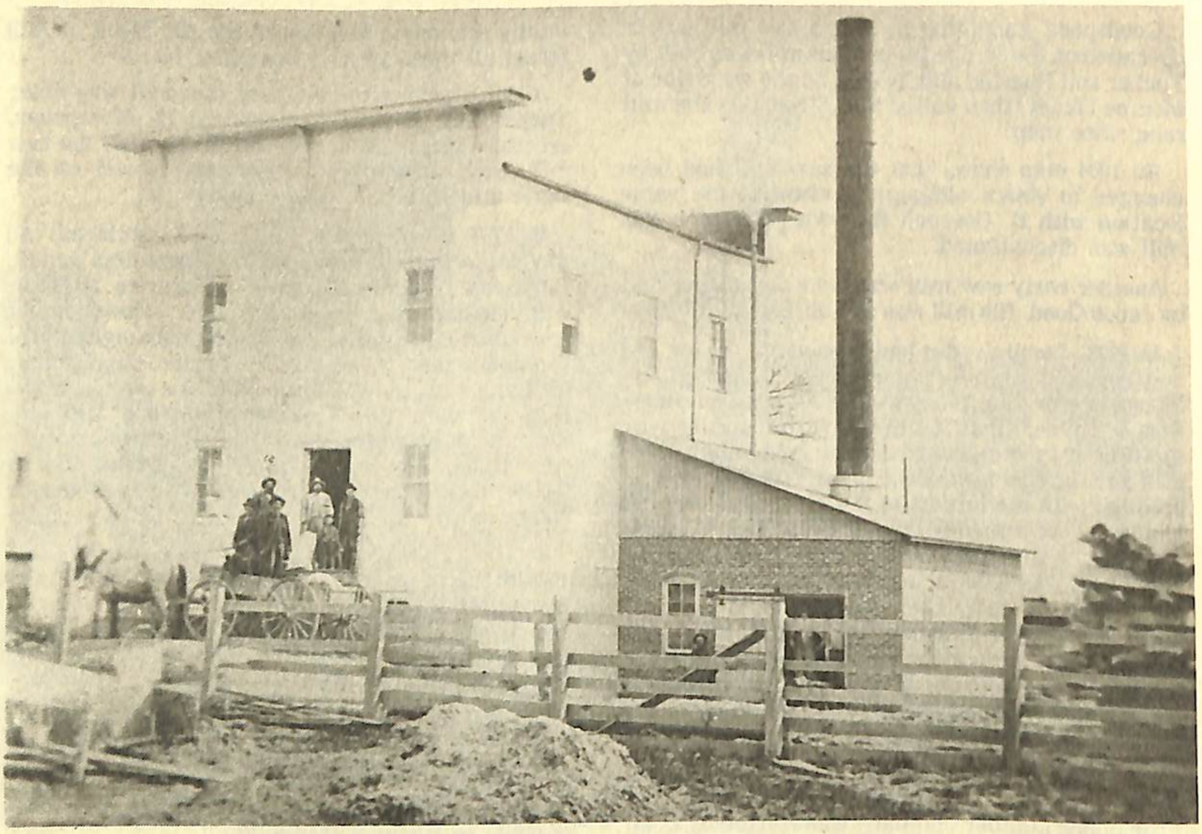
With the progress of milling, Joseph Deibely, sole owner of the water grist mill in 1881, changed to steam. Mr. Deibely was a German immigrant, having learned the milling trade there and was considered a master of his trade.

The river continued its natural course, when the mill race was no longer used, until it was dredged and straightened in 1907. Dec. 13, 1906 - "the high water in the St. Joe makes dredging work impossible so it's at a standstill."

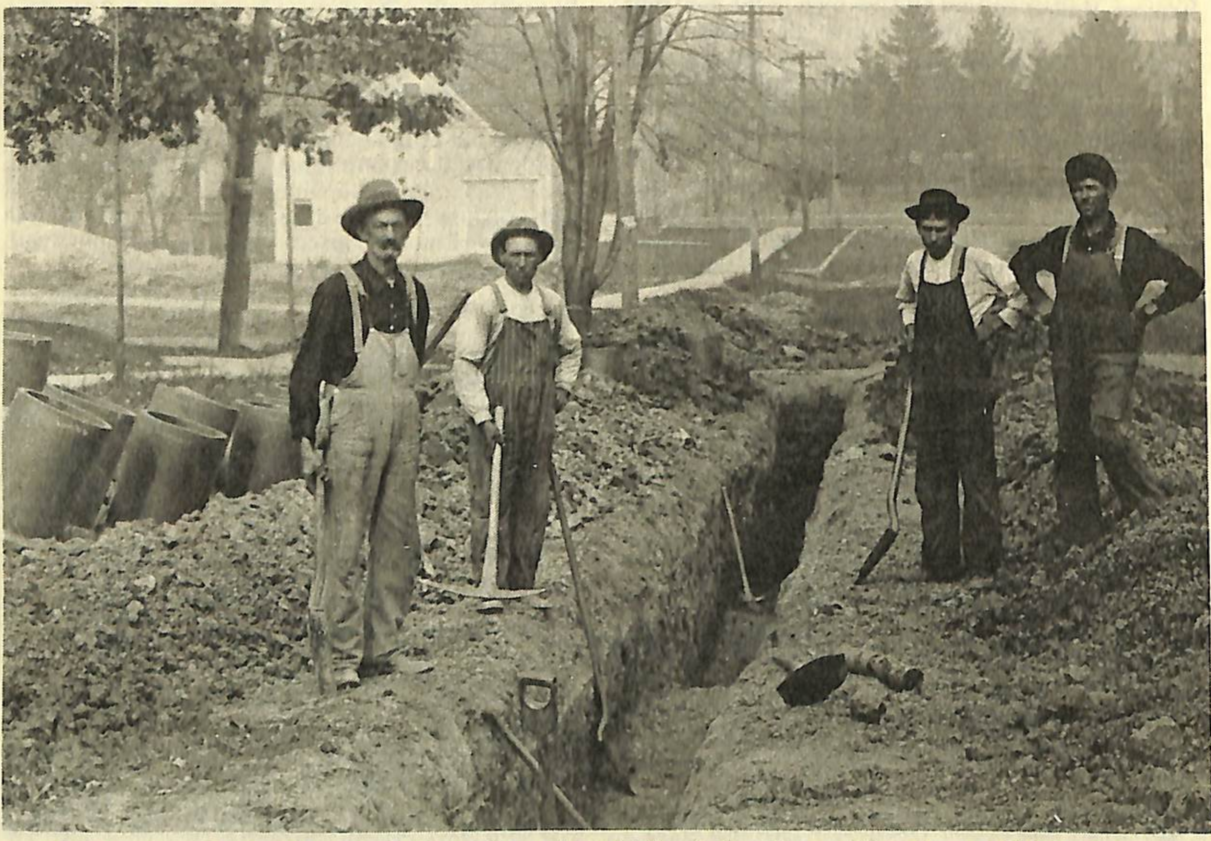
Originally, the St. Joe followed a different path. (See map). It was very twisting and formed an island that the villagers used as a park and meeting place. A 1904 map shows that it was then necessary to cross 3 bridges when entering Montpelier from the west as the southern part of the island extended beyond our present Route 107. A small area was scooped out at the narrow end to the north and thus eliminated the island. They also straightened other sections at the same time. A number of farmers were opposed to the dredging. A committee was formed and money raised to fight it, but to no avail. Thus the river of today is much different.



No. 9 — Empire Street looking south from Main. Dentist sign above bank on right - citizens congregated outside post office on right. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Chalmer Burd.



No. 10 — Gratz grist mill located where Wermer's Pet Shop now stands. Circa 1880's. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.



No. 11 — Looking north to Main Street from the middle of what is now Platt Street. Old Rothenberger home in background on right now location of Sohio Station. Pressler home on left. Laying tile by hand are L-R John Nye, Dan Bohner, Jake Wisman and Frank Buntain. Circa 1905. Photo courtesy of the Carl Bohners.

A new grist mill was built in 1884 (See Photo No. 12). It was erected south of the first one and the old one presumedly torn down about 6 years later as the newspaper item of January 30, 1890 seems to indicate.

"The old grist mill building owned by M. Dieble is soon to go the way of all the earth - razed to the ground. For upwards of 40 years, it did duty without cessation for all the inhabitants round about, but now its massive frame will be used for fire wood.

When run as a water mill, it played the double part in prolonging and shortening man's earthly career, in that its daily output of flour sustained life, while the back-water in the mill dam furnished an abundance of malaria, sufficient to take life. The old structure has long been an eye-sore and we are glad to see it go."

The new mill operated until 1920 when it was sold at auction and torn down to make way for a housing development known as Storrer Court. The last owner of the "Montpelier City Mills" was the Storrer Brothers. Their brand of flour "The Pride of Montpelier" was well known.

Another mill, known as the Gratz Mill, was built in 1876 by Crowl & Haverstock and stood where Wermer's Pet Shop is now located at 206 W. Main. (see photo no. 10) After running six weeks, the boiler burst "shattering the structure to smithereens." The next season, Milton Shaull erected, upon the same foundation, a new mill. The Gratz name was associated with the mill in 1878. Four years later they thoroughly remodeled with the latest equipment and were prepared to furnish custom work, besides furnishing flour and feed for foreign markets. The mill was discontinued in 1887.

PLATTING OF MONTPELIER

Varying stories along with legal documents tend to make Montpelier's beginnings most interesting and open to speculation as to what actually happened but no one will ever know for sure.

The following information was taken from articles written in 1945 when Montpelier was 100 years old. It stated that a Leader-Enterprise reporter found the following mentioned documents in the office of the County Recorder in Bryan.

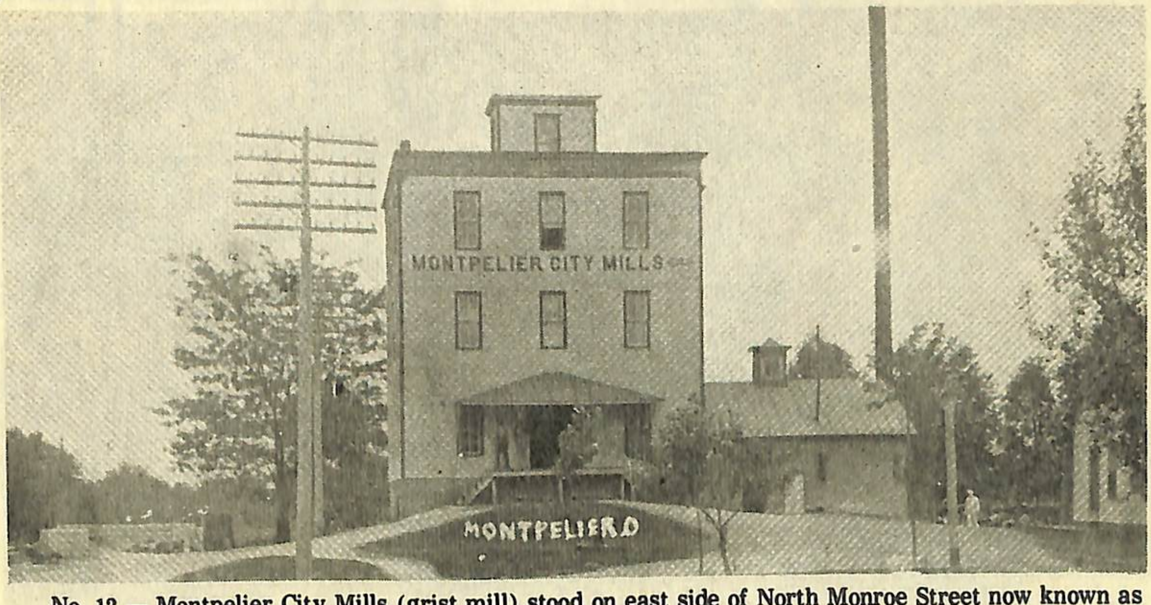
A quotation from the deed read: "In consideration of $425 to me paid by John Miller of Williams County, Ohio, I, William S. Miller do sell and convey to said John Miller 40 acres in quantity from the west side of the SW fraction of Section 2 in Superior Township with the privilege of erecting a dam across the St. Joseph's River bottom upon said land as its east boundary of at least 5½ feet in height and higher not to exceed six feet of the same can be done without flowing (flooding) land along said dam."

In granting a deed to John Miller, the owner, William S. Miller of New York stated that it was the same land contracted by said grantor to one Bryner and under date of April, 1844.

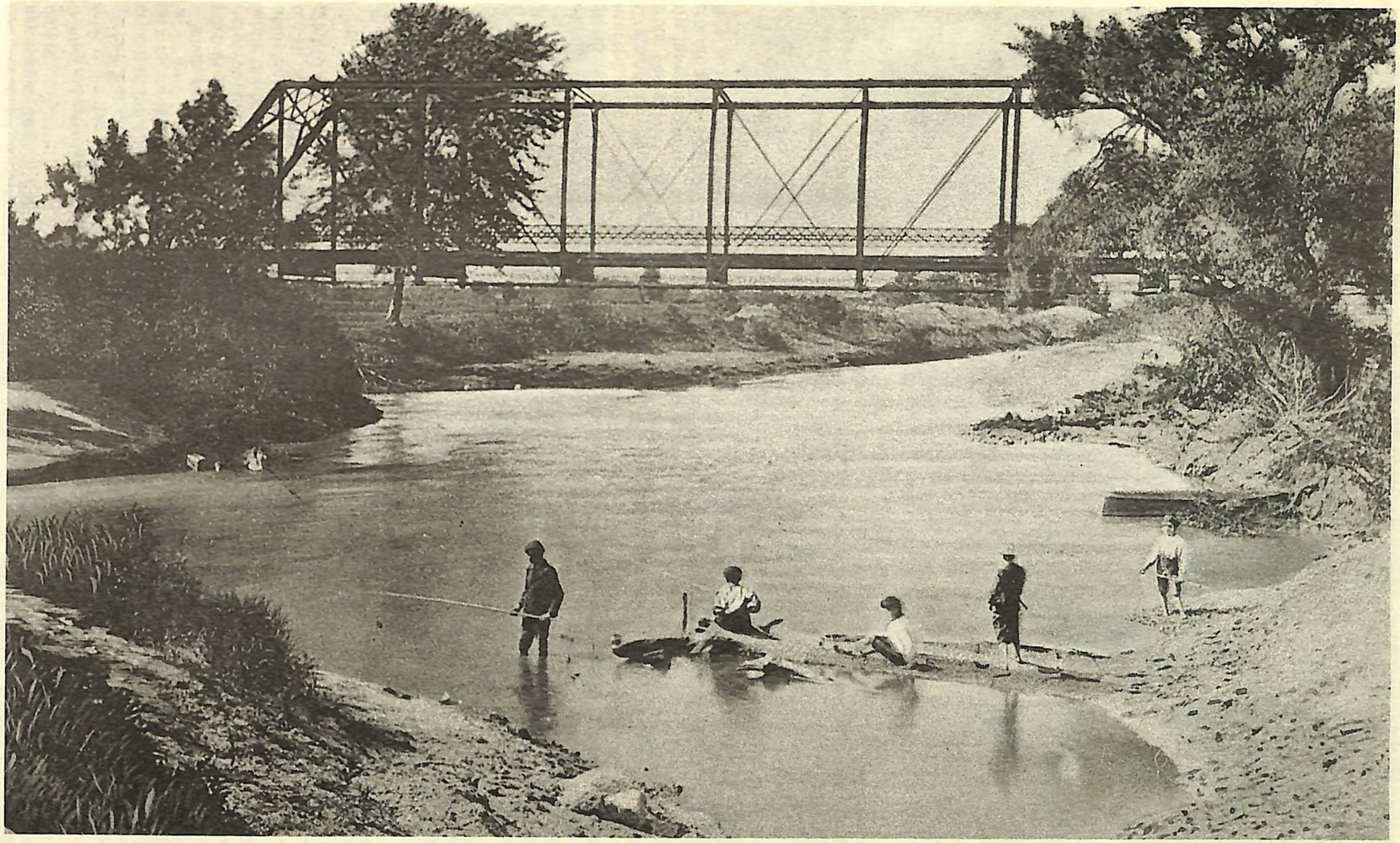
The following is from the original plat record.

State of Ohio
Williams County, SS:
I do hereby certify this to be a correct plat and field notes of the Town of Montpelier, situated in the southwest fraction of Section two, town seven north of Range two east, in Williams County, Ohio. Surveyed by Thomas Ogle and certified by me.
(Signed) S. B. Wyatt
Co. Surv. Pro tem

May 25, 1845
Variation two and one half degrees. The above town is located in the southwest fraction of Section Two, Town seven north of range 2E, Williams County, Ohio. The public square is twelve rods square, the streets are four rods wide. The lots are four by eight rods, except Lot 27, which is a half lot, alleys being one rod wide. A stone at the southwest corner of the Public Square place of beginning of survey.
(Signed) Jesse Tucker
J. K. Bryner



No. 12 — Montpelier City Mills (grist mill) stood on east side of North Monroe Street now known as Storrer Court. North bridge was apparently being replaced on left. Circa 1900. Photo courtesy of Howard Wilson.



No. 13 — Old bridge leading west of town. Circa 1909. Photo courtesy of Chalmer Burd.

State of Ohio
Williams County, SS:
Before me, Henry Sheets a justice of the peace, in and for said county, personally appeared the within named Jesse Tucker and J. K. Bryner and acknowledged the signing of the within Town Plat to be their voluntary act and deed this 4th day of June, A.D. 1845.

(Signed) Henry Sheets, J.P.

The above Town Plat was received for record, June 4th one thousand and eight hundred forty five, and recorded 21st same month.

(Signed) Jacob Youse, Recorder

An account taken from an autobiography of Charles N. Mallory, son of Montpelier's first merchant, states his father (Conroy W. Mallory) moved to Montpelier in 1845 when Charles was 5. Tucker and Huston offered his father a lot if he would get a surveyor to survey the town plat. He walked to Williams Center and got Miller Arrowsmith to survey the town. Arrowsmith walked from Williams Center to Pulaski (then LaFayette) and Dr. John Paul hauled him from there to Montpelier. Dr. Paul told Tucker that he wanted to name the town Montpelier after the capital of his native state, Vermont. Both were prominent citizens in 1845, Arrowsmith, surveyor of Bryan and numerous towns and Paul a former county recorder.

Although Thomas Ogle was named as surveyor, it seems probable that Arrowsmith being an experienced surveyor and having the necessary instruments may have done the actual field work and left the field notes to be worked out by Mr. Ogle. (S. B. Wyatt replaced Arrowsmith as county surveyor just before Montpelier was platted).

The offering of a free lot for securing a surveyor seems to indicate that Tucker and Bryner were on a tight budget. Another account to support the fact that Tucker and Bryner thought they owned the land or at least had others convinced of the fact is seen in the following portion of an article on the life of Henry S. Kunkle who platted the village of Kunkle. "Upon arrival in West Unity which consisted of 3 homes and a store, he learned of the sawmill being built at Montpelier. He came over and was employed by Tucker, Hueston and Bryner who owned 40 acres of the town site. He helped cut over that 40 acres, felling logs and helping build the first log house in Montpelier."

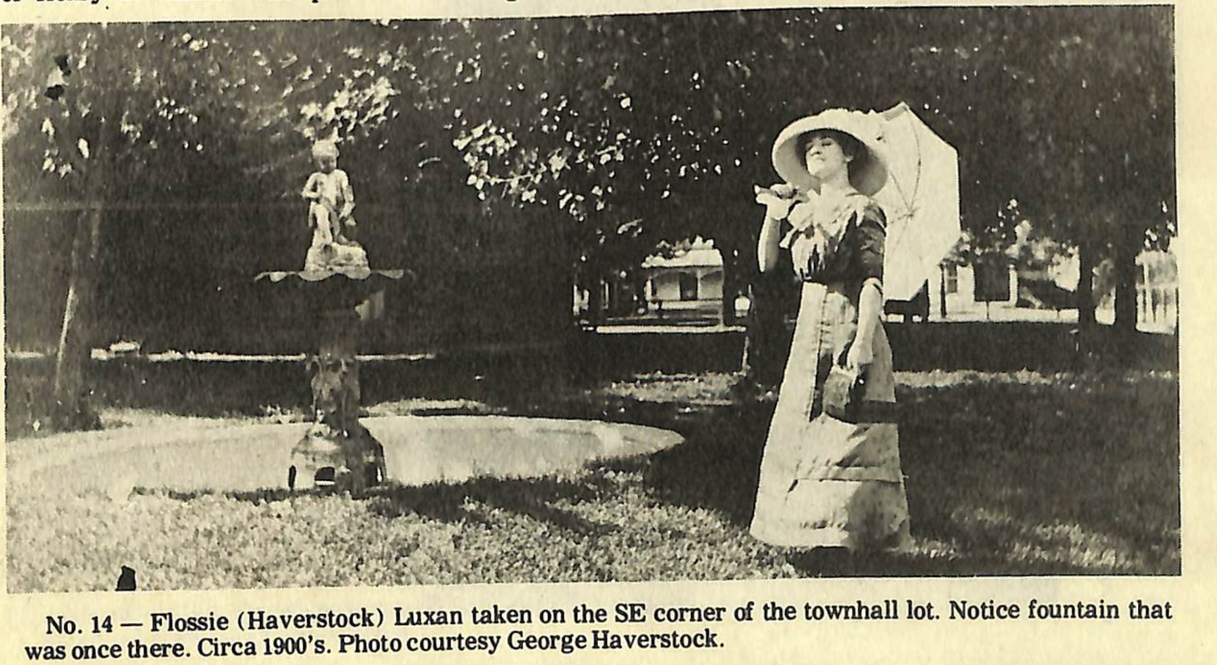
The fact that they did not legally own the land is shown in deeds found in Vol. 9 which says the owner was John and Rebecca Miller. Lots 6 and 7 were sold to Conroy W. Mallory for $50.00 so it appears that Mr. Mallory never received his free lot.

From all indications, it seems that while Tucker and Bryner probably did not own the land when the town plat was made, they did hold some sort of land contract which must have appeared genuine to county officials. The contract must have been dropped or declared invalid before the lots were sold.

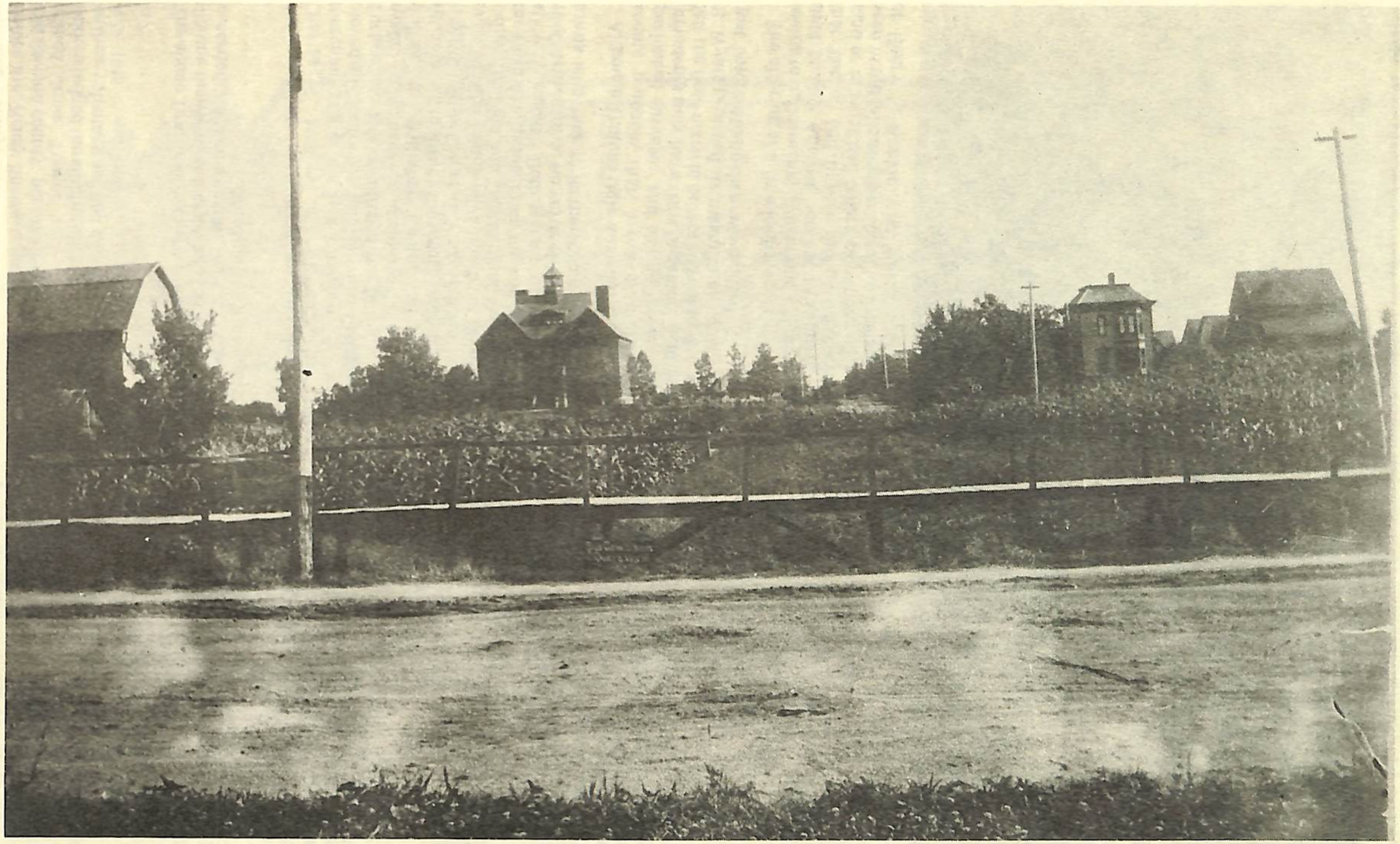
Whatever the case may be, there is no denying that Tucker and Bryner did plat Montpelier and thus go down in Montpelier's history as co-founders of the town.

Little is known of Jesse Tucker. As early as 1835, a man named Tucker, from Detroit, owned land in Bridgewater Township (then a part of Michigan) and had planned to build a grist mill there. But after having it surveyed and a small clearing made, abandoned the idea as too costly. It was wild unsettled land and known for many years as Tucker's Clearing.

The name Tucker also was used to describe the location west of Montpelier (described earlier) as Tuckertown. It seems probable that this was the same man and he was a land speculator and thus never stayed in a location long. His name doesn't appear as one of the early settlers in this area, only that he was co-owner of the first sawmill built before Montpelier was platted and he probably built it as a means of drawing settlers to the area.



No. 14 — Flossie (Haverstock) Luxan taken on the SE corner of the townhall lot. Notice fountain that was once there. Circa 1900's. Photo courtesy George Haverstock.



No. 15 — Main Street looking south before Platt Street came through to Main Street. Cranberry Run was in area between corn fields. Union School on left. Notice high wooden sidewalks with rails. Light poles date the photo approximately 1896. Photo courtesy of Robert "Jum" Kunkle.

John Bryner, on the other hand, did stay. He built a home on his 40 acre farm which is now the home of the caretaker of the fairgrounds. It is considered one of the oldest in the county. When purchased for use as a fairgrounds, the land had a fine grove of 4 or 5 acres in the northwest corner and a fine orchard on the south of the ground. The land extended from Main Street to the river and East Avenue to Fulton Road. Mr. Bryner died in 1871 and is buried in the Louden Cemetery.

The General Assembly of Ohio had certain specifications to follow when establishing a town. All had to have a public ground with a stone at the corner from which all surveys would be made. Streets and alleys were to be provided listing the width and length. And the plat had to be certified by a surveyor, acknowledged by the proprietor and recorded. There was a penalty of $50.00 for each lot sold before the plat was recorded.

The plat record shows that Montpelier's public ground was the square where the present townhall is located and it was called the "park". The survey stone is located at the SW corner but covered by cement today. The square is twelve rods square and the streets are four rods wide (66 feet). The lots are four by eight rods (66' X 132') and the alleys one rod wide (16½').

There were 41 lots in the original town. All were regulation size except Lot 27 which was a half lot because of Cranberry Run going across part of the lot. (See map)

The street running north and south on the west side of the square was called Mill Street (now Monroe) because the saw mill and grist mill were located on both sides leading north out of town. The north and south street on the east side was named Jonesville then as now.

The east and west street on the north side was named Water Street as at that time the river ran very near it, thus the name. The east and west street on the south side (now Madison) was the original Main Street and remained so for nearly 50 years. Our present Main Street wasn't even considered a street at that time, but merely a county road.

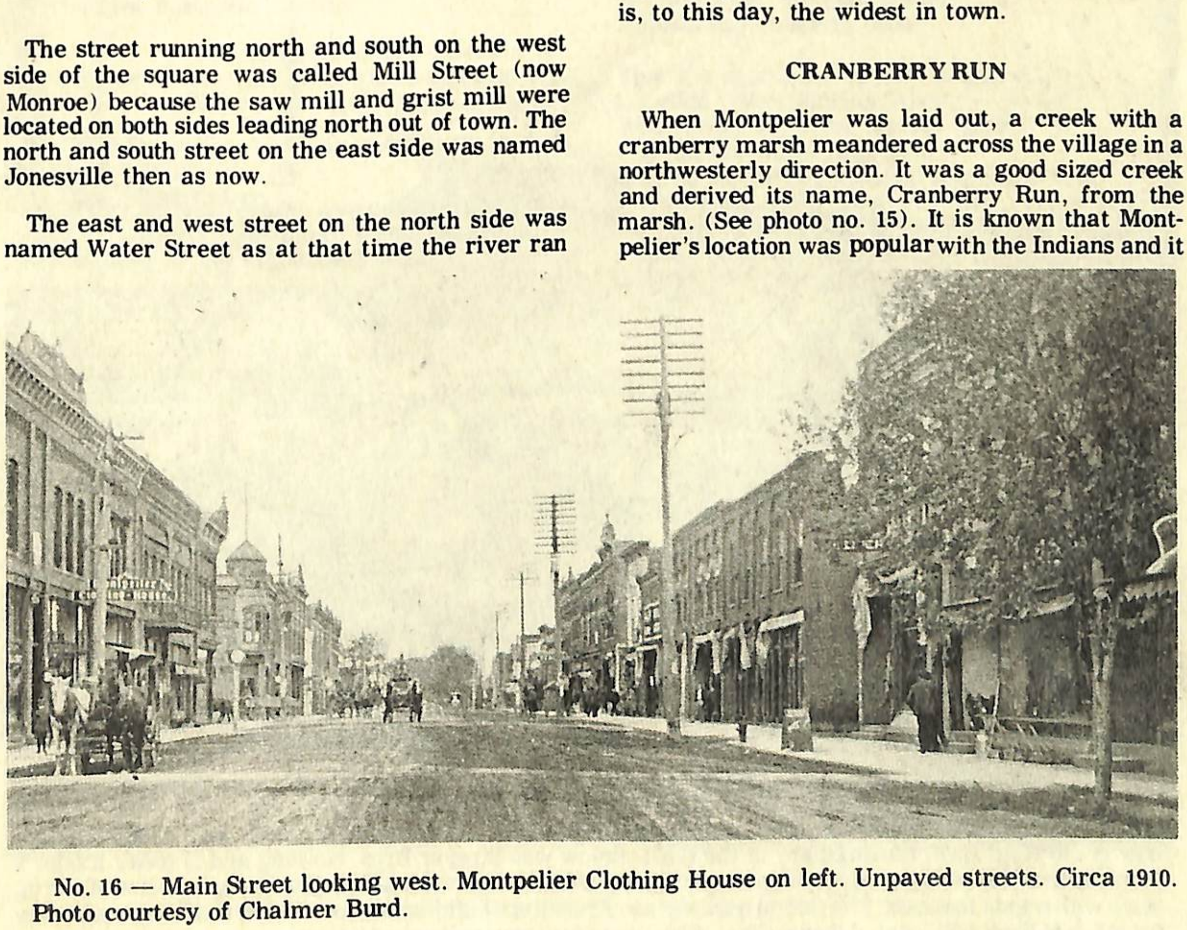
There were 5 alleys leading north from the county road (present Main Street) to the former Main Street to be used as a means of getting to the town proper. It is presumed the founding fathers expected the business district to be built around the square.

The original town plat of 41 lots was followed in 1851 by Merry & Bryant's "First Addition." It was laid out south of Main Street to the area between Jonesville and Ohio Street and east to Empire. This was the extent of the village for 21 years. When new lots were platted in 1872, they went south also. The town continued to build mainly west of Empire Street over the next few years except for an addition called South Montpelier. It was located south of Lawrence and bordered by Bryant Street and East Avenue.

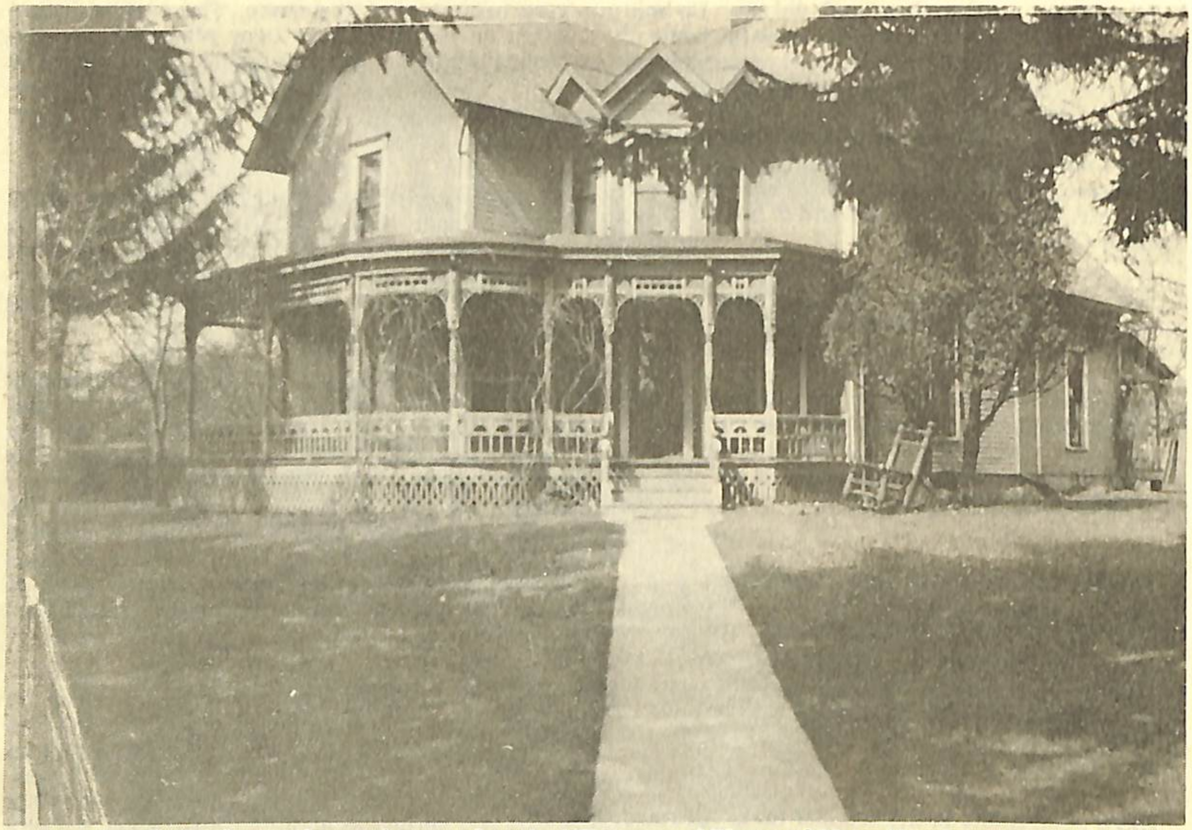
When Broad Street was built and made wider (80 feet), it resulted in all future streets built to the east of it having a jog at Main Street when matching up to the streets north of Main Street. Dr. I. M. Snyder platted more of the village than any other man. It is told that when he was platting Broad Street, his wife Eleanor (Merry) said the streets were being platted too narrow. Thus he made it 80 feet and said "There's your blankety blank old broad street." It is, to this day, the widest in town.

CRANBERRY RUN

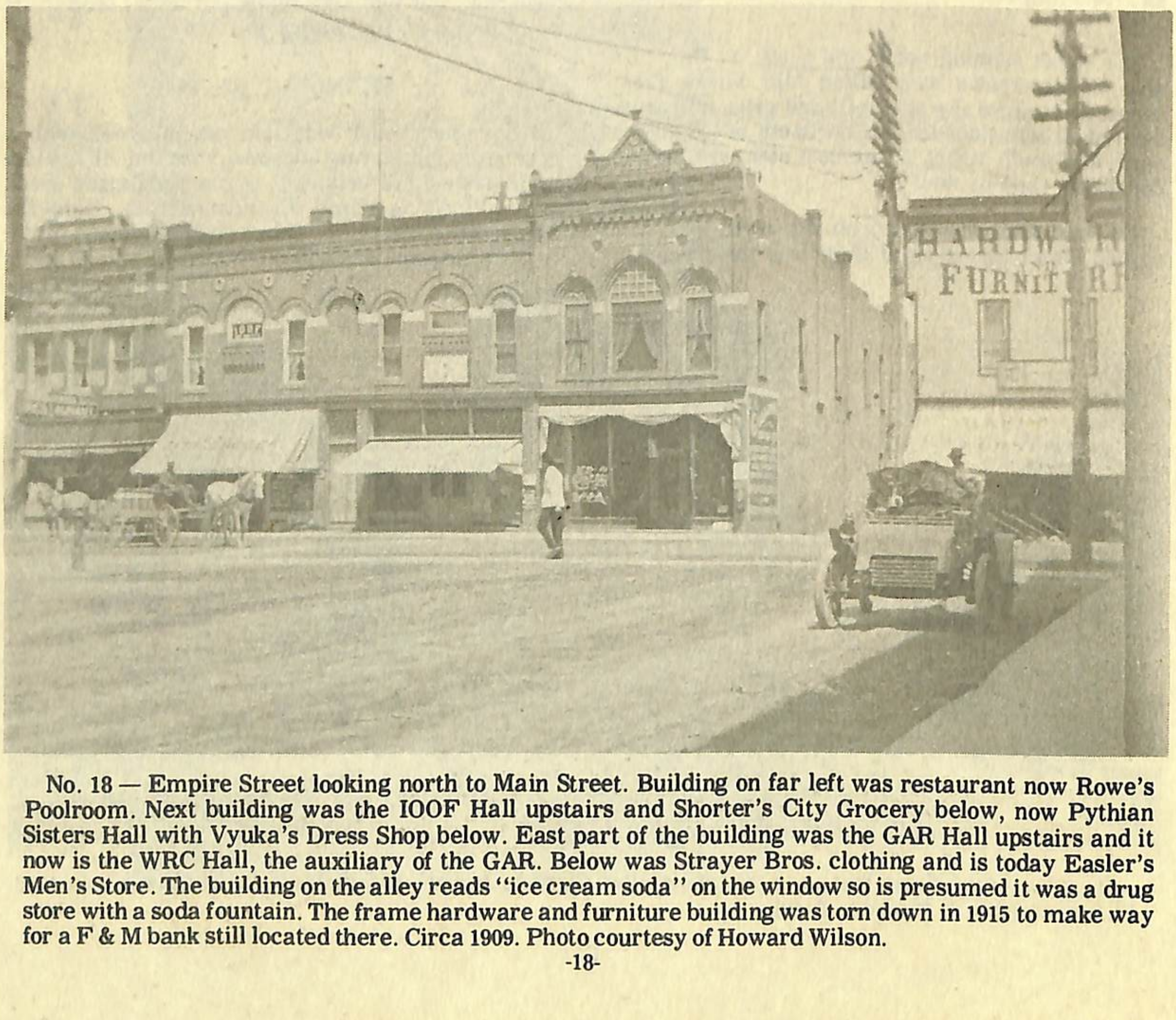
When Montpelier was laid out, a creek with a cranberry marsh meandered across the village in a northwesterly direction. It was a good sized creek and derived its name, Cranberry Run, from the marsh. (See photo no. 15). It is known that Montpelier's location was popular with the Indians and it



No. 16 — Main Street looking west. Montpelier Clothing House on left. Unpaved streets. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Chalmer Burd.



No. 17 — Rothenberger house that stood on the NE corner of Platt and Main. Now location of Sohio Gas station. Circa 1900. Photo courtesy Mrs. Nancy (Rothenberger) Byers.



No. 18 — Empire Street looking north to Main Street. Building on far left was restaurant now Rowe's Poolroom. Next building was the IOOF Hall upstairs and Shorter's City Grocery below, now Pythian Sisters Hall with Vyuka's Dress Shop below. East part of the building was the GAR Hall upstairs and it now is the WRC Hall, the auxiliary of the GAR. Below was Strayer Bros. clothing and is today Easler's Men's Store. The building on the alley reads "ice cream soda" on the window so is presumed it was a drug store with a soda fountain. The frame hardware and furniture building was torn down in 1915 to make way for a F & M bank still located there. Circa 1909. Photo courtesy of Howard Wilson.

is believed that they had a small encampment on Cranberry Run about where the present Platt Street grade school is located.

Montpelier residents were accustomed to high wooden sidewalks across the creek bottoms on both sides of Main Street and the south side of Washington Street. (see photo No. 15)

In 1900, Cranberry Run came right down the middle of Platt Street on the block between Main and Washington. (See photo No. 15) Nettles and weeds along the creek were a common sight. At Main Street it turned northwest across the street towards the river. There was a stone bridge at this location.

July 4, 1895 - Cranberry Run Bridge cap stones didn't arrive so bridge could be completed (by the 4th of July celebration) thus vehicles going to fairgrounds have to take a mile square detour. July 11, 1895 - Mignion and Youse finished the stone bridge last Monday to the satisfaction of all citizens of Montpelier.

Many thousands of loads of dirt have been dumped into Cranberry Run bottoms to raise it up to its present day levels. Much of the dirt came from excavations of cellars uptown when the brick business buildings were constructed.

A newspaper account of 1889, says that A. P. Rothenberger has finished filling in his yard and it is quite a nice improvement. His home was located where the Sohio Station now stands at 107 E. Main. (See photo No. 17) The old landmark was torn down in 1963, to make way for the station, much to the regret of the nostalgic minded.

In 1904, the creek was diverted into the main 54" sewer which at that time was constructed east and west across the village at a cost of $16,500.00.

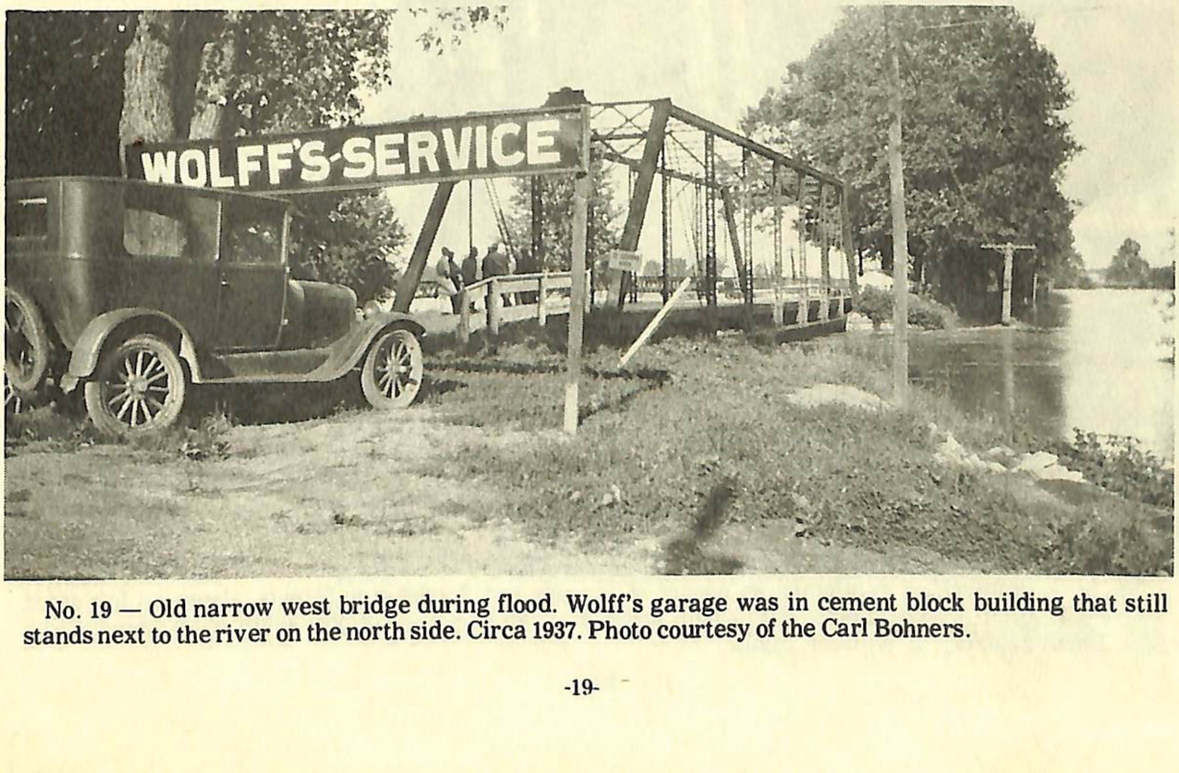
The high sidewalks were torn down in 1911, when the street was paved.

Until the asphalt top coat was put over the Main Street pavement in 1946, there was a bump in the street caused by the old stone bridge.

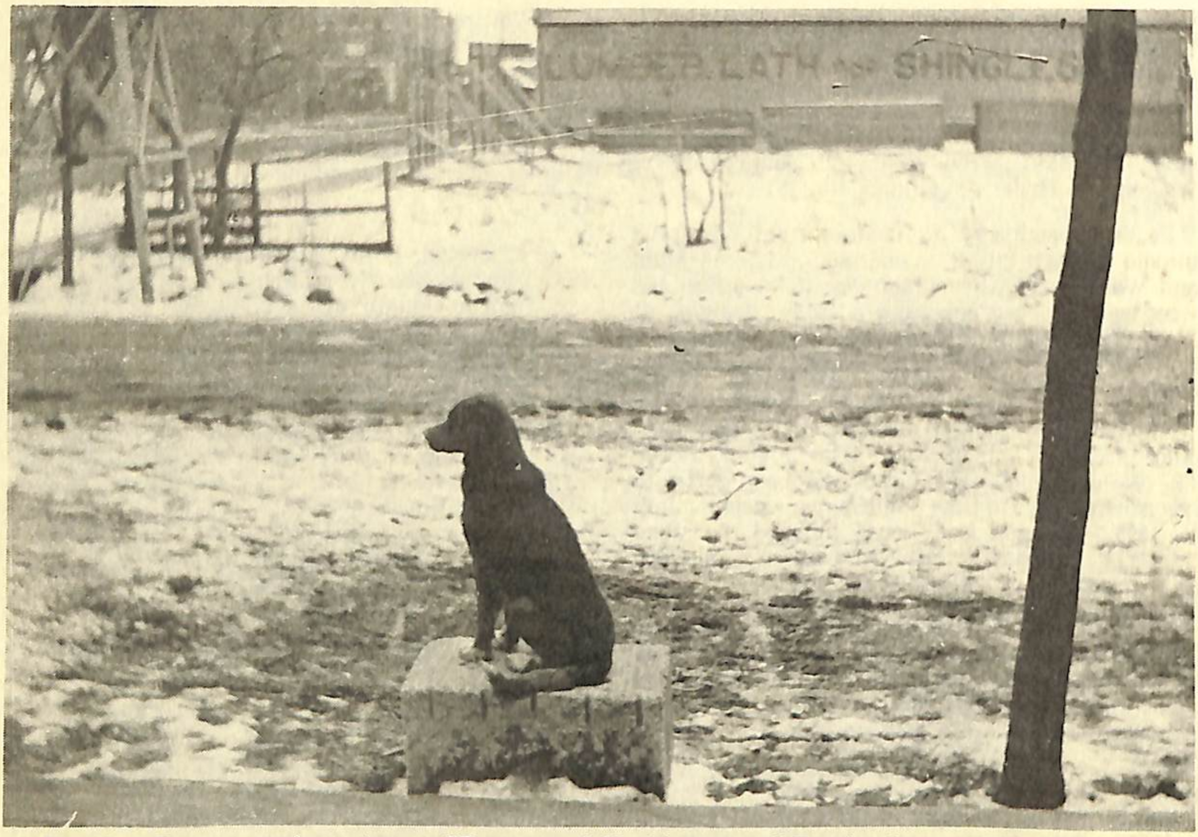
Following is an original poem recited by Mr. W. C. Leet in approximately 1902 as entertainment at the Presbyterian Church sponsored by the Ladies' Aid Society. It was given Keith Porter by Miss Jennie Fry a teacher in Montpelier for many years. Following the poem is a brief explanation of the names and topics mentioned.

T'other evenin' I wus wanderin'
  Out acrosst the river flats,
An' I got to thinkin' of the changes,
  'Sence we old men wus brats;
When this town wus jes' four corners,
  An' they wa'nt but jes' one store,
An' the neardest railroad roun' here
  Wus thirty miles, or more;
An' they wa'nt no water-workses,
  An' no electrick light,
An' we hed time devided
  Es God made it, day an' night.
When we hed the old log schoolhous'
  With the bare groun' fur a floor,
An' all the brats thet come to school
  Wus me an' three four more.
When they wa'nt no bells a tollin'
  An' they wa'nt no whistles screamin',
An' Dame Nature hed her own sweet way
  Frum mornin' until evenin'
An' we could hear the ripplin' musick
  Uv thet leetle streamlet flow,
Down roun' amongst the grassy hills,
  Towards the old Saint Joe;
An' we rolled our pantaloons up,
  When the deestrick school was done,
An' we brats, all went wadin'
  Down in Cranberry Run.

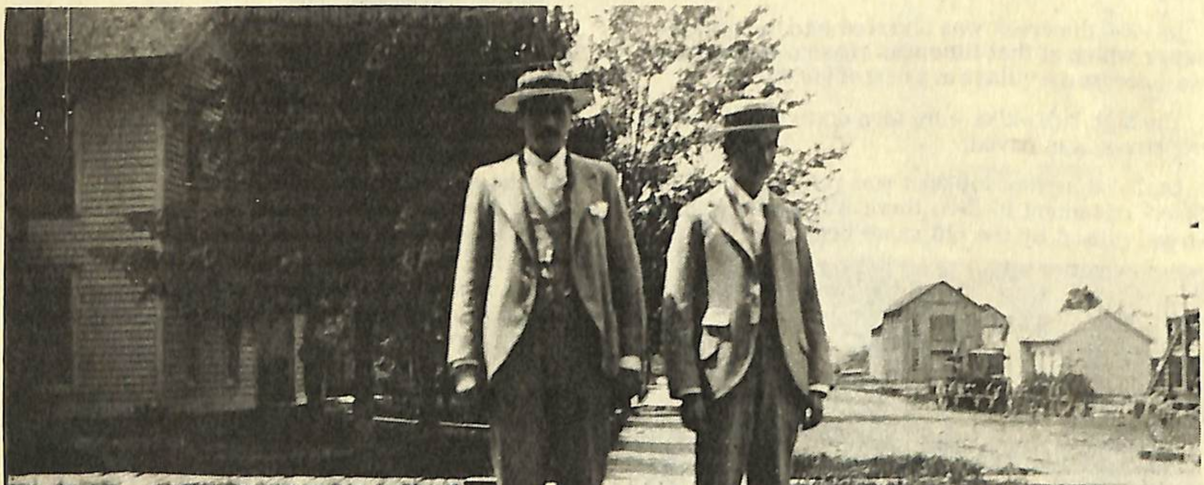
Ther's a church in London, England,
  Called "Westminister Abby,"
Where they'v got the bestest choir
  In all the world they say;
Deacon Boone hes heeared thet choir sing.
  An' he says they sing sublime,
But he'd es soon hear brother Shrieve'es
  Choir sing 'most any time.



No. 19 — Old narrow west bridge during flood. Wolff's garage was in cement block building that still stands next to the river on the north side. Circa 1937. Photo courtesy of the Carl Bohners.



No. 20 — Dog on carriage step on SE corner of Washington and Empire Streets. Unknown lumber company located where Zulchs is now. Vacant lot is now Masonic Temple Building. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy William Taylor.



No. 21 — Unidentified gentlemen on corner of Empire and Washington Streets. House on left stood where post office is now. It belonged to John Zeiter who ran livery stable just south of his home. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.

An' I reckon brother Landis'eses
  Choir's jest es good,
Es any choir they is
  Aroun' this neighborhood
I've heeared most all the choirs
  Thet they is fur miles aroun'
An' I'v heeared sister Willett sing
  Some solos most profoun',
I'v heeared our brass band playin'
  An' it's mighty fine uv course,
(Geo. Yesbera heeared Phil Susa,
  An' he says thet he's heeared worse)
But I haint heeared no musick,
  To my mind half so sweet,
Es the musick when the dew-drops
  An' the rain-drops used to meet
In thet leetle ripplin' brooklet,
  Where we always hed such fun,
When we bare-foot brats went wadin'
  Down in Cranberry Run.

I heeared thet famous orator,
  Thet speached here July fourth,
(We used to call him "Billy" Shinn,
  He came from jest up north)
Tellin' 'bout the musick in
  The progress thet's been made,
Sence this nation wus a leetle one,
  An' sed she wa'nt afraid.
An' I s'pose the's mighty musick
  In the hum uv industry,
When men like to hunt big dollars
  An' haint got no memory;
Musick in the shriekin' whistles,
  Clangin' bells, an' puffin' steam,
(Even politics, Will Louden says,
  Is run by a machine;)
Railroad musick worth rememberin',
  Fer the likes 'aint often heeared,
Es when Bill Tuck pulled thet Skat Club
  So fast that every Skat wus skeeared;
But I haint never heeared no musick
  An' I s'pose I never will,
Like the musick thet we used to hear
  Jes' down behind the hill,
Where thet leetle ripplin' wavelets
  Seemed to smile an' kiss the Sun,
When we bare-foot brats went wadin'
  Down in Cranberry Run.

Deestrick School - district school meant local school

Deacon Boone - W. S. Boone, staunch member of the Methodist Church

Brother Shrieve'es Choir - Methodist Church Choir

Brother Landis'eses Choir - First United Brethern Choir, Pastor W. W. Landis

Sister Willett - Rose Willett, wife of newspaper editor & Presbyterian

Geo Yesbera - owner of first clothing store in Montpelier

Billy Shinn - Judge William H. Shinn - one time editor of Montpelier Enterprise and author of the 1905 History of Williams County.

Will Louden - Founder of Louden Department Store

Bill Tuck - an engineer on the Wabash Railroad credited with taking a passenger train over the road at a record breaking speed.

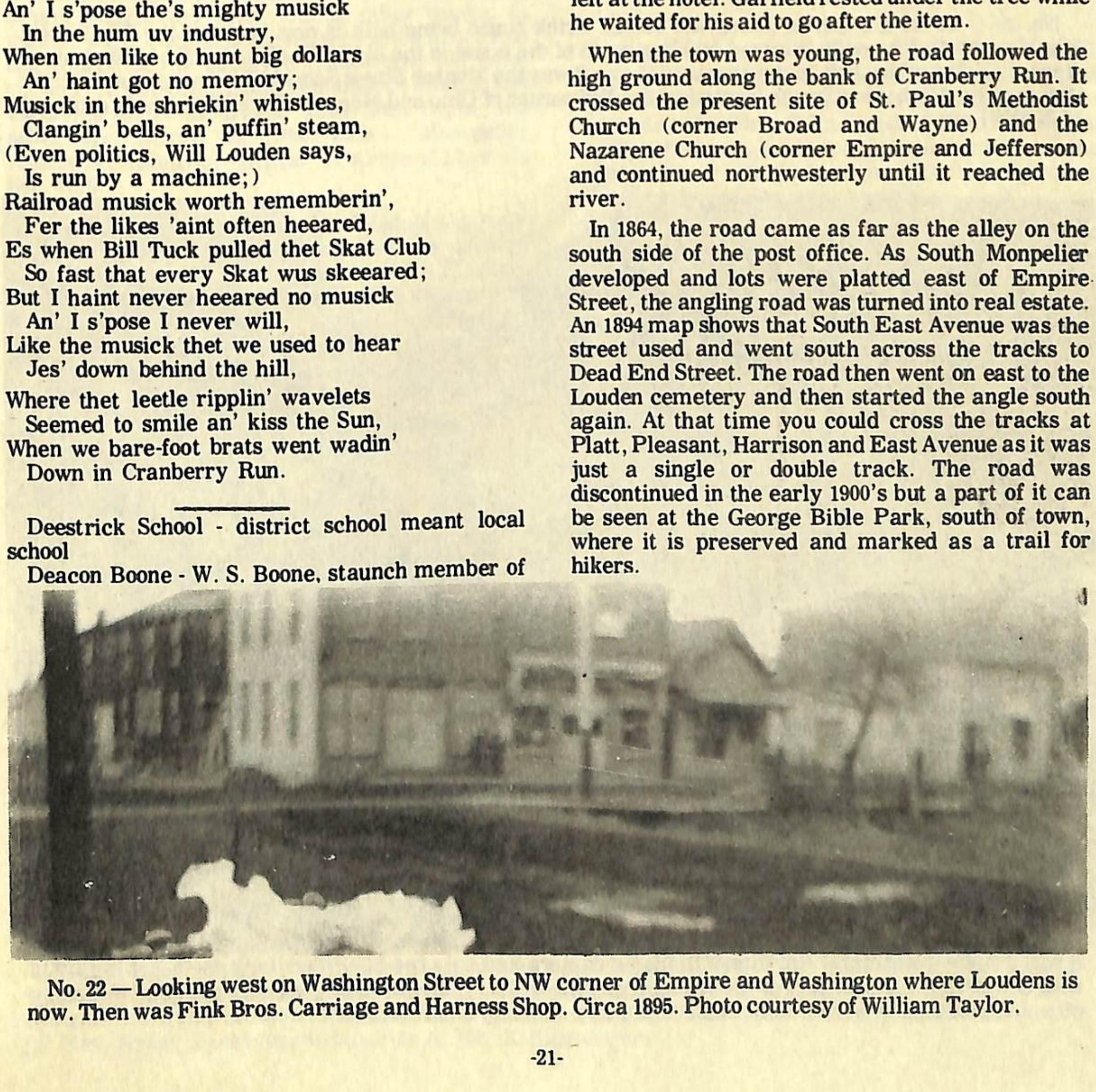
OLD ANGLING ROAD

In 1887, the best way to Bryan was via the angling road, even though it no longer came through town.

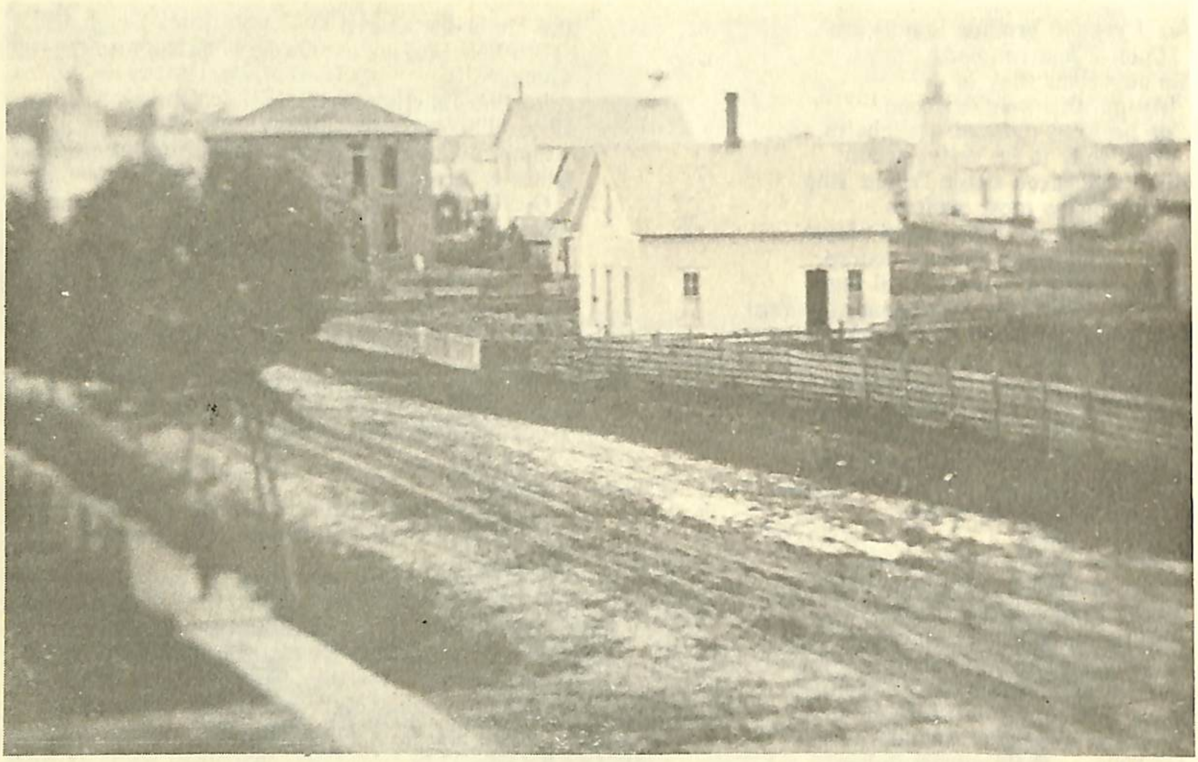
There was once a large tree in the center of the road in front of the Louden Cemetery (east of Evergreen Nursing Home) and it was left standing for years because of its historical value. It is told that James A. Garfield (later President of the United States) had made a speech in Montpelier and upon leaving, it was found that something had been left at the hotel. Garfield rested under the tree while he waited for his aid to go after the item.

When the town was young, the road followed the high ground along the bank of Cranberry Run. It crossed the present site of St. Paul's Methodist Church (corner Broad and Wayne) and the Nazarene Church (corner Empire and Jefferson) and continued northwesterly until it reached the river.

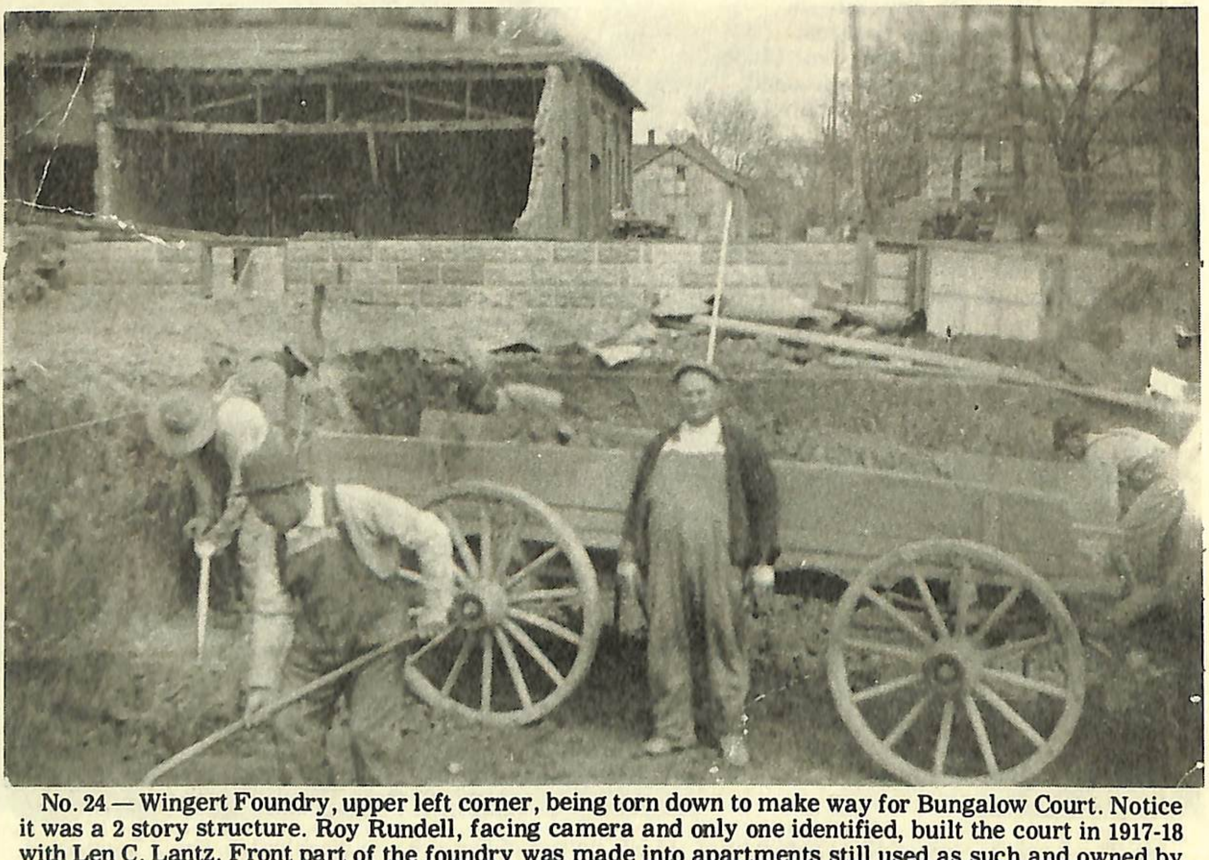
In 1864, the road came as far as the alley on the south side of the post office. As South Monpelier developed and lots were platted east of Empire Street, the angling road was turned into real estate. An 1894 map shows that South East Avenue was the street used and went south across the tracks to Dead End Street. The road then went on east to the Louden cemetery and then started the angle south again. At that time you could cross the tracks at Platt, Pleasant, Harrison and East Avenue as it was just a single or double track. The road was discontinued in the early 1900's but a part of it can be seen at the George Bible Park, south of town, where it is preserved and marked as a trail for hikers.



No. 22 — Looking west on Washington Street to NW corner of Empire and Washington where Loudens is now. Then was Fink Bros. Carriage and Harness Shop. Circa 1895. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.



No. 23 — Looking south on Jonesville Street. Brick house being built is now home of the Dr. Robert Kimbles, 301 S. Jonesville. Blurred building south of the house is the old U. B. Church. The white 2 story frame building with a bell on the corner of the roof was the Monroe Street School. The church on the right was the first Methodist Church located on the NW corner of Ohio and Monroe. Circa 1880. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.



No. 24 — Wingert Foundry, upper left corner, being torn down to make way for Bungalow Court. Notice it was a 2 story structure. Roy Rundell, facing camera and only one identified, built the court in 1917-18 with Len C. Lantz. Front part of the foundry was made into apartments still used as such and owned by Mrs. John Rundell who lives in the south half. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Rundell.

EARLY BUSINESS

It is generally conceded that Conroy W. Mallory opened the first general merchandise store in Montpelier in 1845. No doubt the store was on the ground level and his home above. The building is still standing and is the Darby residence at 307 N. Monroe.

A Mallory store account dated April 14, 1846 was opened by David Singer and he purchased, on account, the following items over an eight month period. One ox bell - $1.50, one yard calico - 13c, one pocket knife - 18c, axe - $1.75, one bar of lead - 10c (probably for bullets), one grass scythe - $1.00, 4 yds. bed ticking - 75c, 3 yds. Kentucky Jeans - $1.50, 2 yds. muslin - 25c, linen thread - 10c, 2 lbs. tobacco - 50c, 1 pair men's thick shoes - $1.25, 1 paper tacks - 10c, 1 spelling book - 13c, paper nails - 08c, 1 pocket book - 20c and half-pound ginger - 09c. After reading the list of purchases it seems evident that Mr. Singer was a family man.

About this same time, G. & R. Brown opened a dry goods and grocery store but the location is unknown.

The ashery (mentioned earlier as moving from Tuckertown) was also operating and was important to Montpelier. Potash and pearlash was made at the ashery which was used, among other things, in making soap. Potash is made from wood ashes and one source of the supply of ashes was the local citizenry. Families in need, with little to offer, could exchange ashes for goods. Thus both buyer and seller were helped out. Dec. 1880 - "Montpelier Ashery is turning out "pearls" at a rate of 2 barrels per week."

In the 1870's, Oscar Lowrey and Jacob Leu each had good general stores. Lowreys was located where Montgomery Wards is now at 401 W. Main and Leus was across the street on the NE corner. Mr. Leu was a native of Switzerland and received his education and 14 years business experience in the dry goods line before emigrating to America. His store was on the now vacant lot where Santa's house is located at Christmas time. The building burned about 1890. In the 1940's, a diningcar sat there and was a restaurant until it burned down. The men's choice of location for their businesses was a big influence in changing the town proper to its present location and away from the public square.

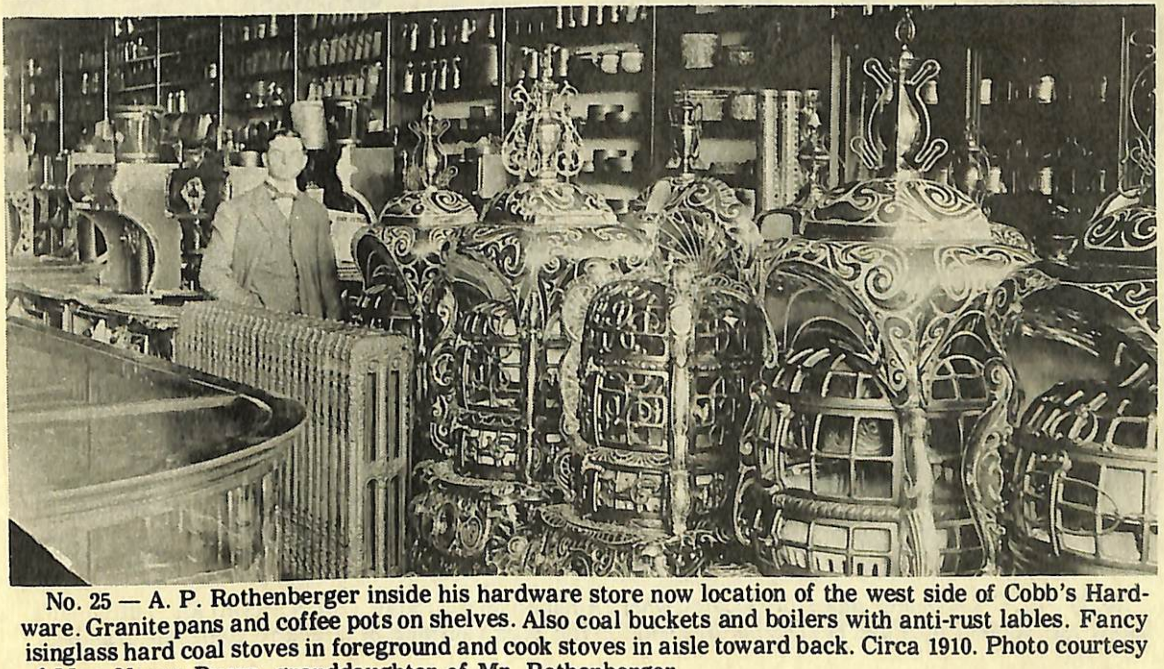
Lewis Wingert established the Wingert Foundry in 1865 at the present site of Bungalow Court. His newspaper ad of March 25, 1881 said the Montpelier Foundry will manufacture and repair all kinds of machinery. Nov. 25, 1881 - "Lewis Wingert's Foundry should be known as the iron column foundry. Besides furnishing for all the stores in this village and other places this season, now has orders to fill yet this fall for a store in Hicksville, one in Edgerton, two at Alvordton and two at this place." They later manufactured and sold furnaces under the name of "Home Comfort."

The school bell mounted in front of the Williams County Historical Society Museum at the fairgrounds and the steps at the K & R Cleaners at 323 W. Main were made at the foundry and are so marked.

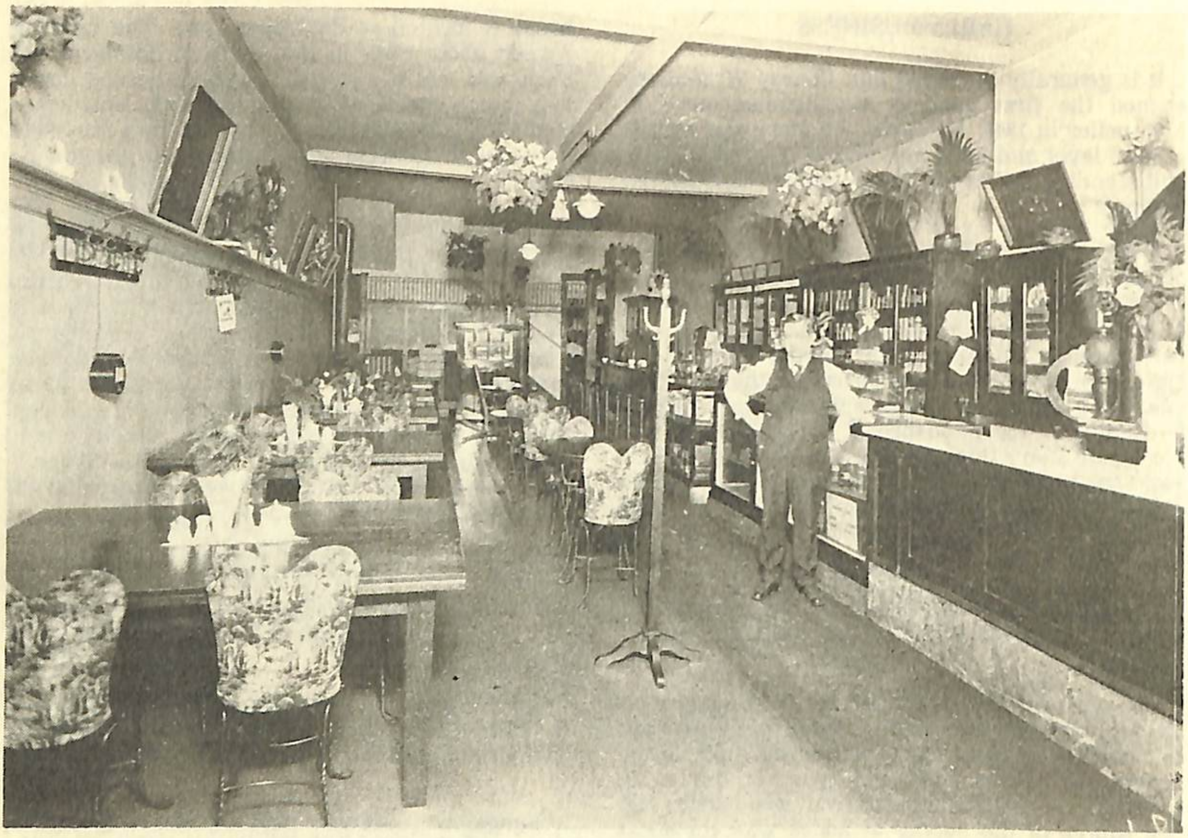
Mr. Wingert built a brick house in 1880 that is now the residence of the Dr. Robert Kimble family at 301 S. Jonesville Street. (See photo No. 23)

Bungalow Court was built in 1917-18 by Len C. Lantz and Roy Rundell. (See photo No. 24) At that time, the foundry was made into apartments and is now owned by Mrs. John Rundell who lives in the south apartment. Brick for the apartments and the Wingert home was made on the Samuel Hause farm SW of town and are very porous.

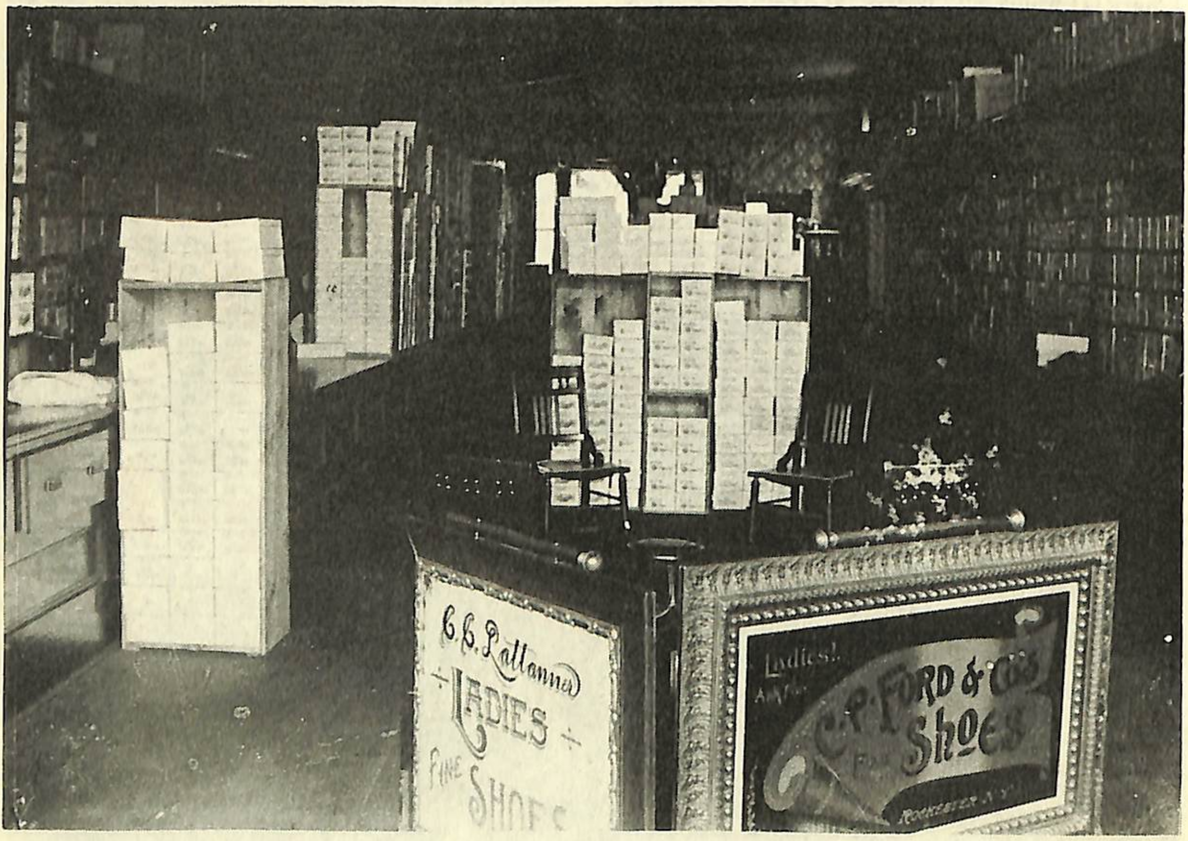
This writer's great uncle, Martin Holt, told that prior to the construction of Bungalow Court, the land on both sides of the foundry was the town dump. The land later used as the town park between the dump and the river was pasture. He remembers being given a nickle to bring a cow from a home near Boone's Mill to the pasture to graze.



No. 25 — A. P. Rothenberger inside his hardware store now location of the west side of Cobb's Hardware. Granite pans and coffee pots on shelves. Also coal buckets and boilers with anti-rust lables. Fancy isinglass hard coal stoves in foreground and cook stoves in aisle toward back. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Nancy Byers, granddaughter of Mr. Rothenberger.



No. 26 — Clinton Gump in his restaurant located where Unique Buffet Bar is now. Circa 1920's. Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Youse.


C. C. Lattanner
LADIES
FINE SHOES
Ladies!
C. P. FORD & CO'S
SHOES
ROCHESTER N.Y.

No. 27 — C. C. Lattanner shoe store located where Allen Bakery is today. (304 W. Main) Mr. Lattanner's hobby was photography and he took all the photos in this book courtesy of William Taylor, his grandson.

In September, 1880, the J. H. Moore Stave and Head Factory was "ready for business as soon as bolts could be obtained." (Staves are the wooden sides for barrels and a heading is the wooden end). A year later, Mr. Moore was working as a cooper in a shop he established nearby and was turning out 30 barrels per day. Oak was used exclusively and to the full extent that it could be furnished. (A few years later, elm that had been considered useless, was fast becoming a staple article and finding a ready market.) His firm is credited with doing a great deal for Montpelier in that they put up one of the finest brick blocks in the village--the bank building on the SE corner of Main and Empire (214 W. Main) and with the Baldwin Bros., a grain elevator at the depot. By 1882, he was in the lumber business but sold his entire stock of lumber to Harrison Louden who, thereafter, carried on the business. Mr. Louden operated a portable mill on his farm which is now residential. It covered most of the area north of Main Street between Platt and East Avenue.

Another stave factory known as the Montpelier Stave and Heading Company was organized in 1889 and continued until 1900. The plant covered 9 acres and it is said to have employed 80 men in 1892. They had 2 engines and a dry kiln.

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By 1882, Montpelier had an oar factory located on the river south of Boone's Lumber Company. Our village was selected as a site because of the abundance of ash timber in the area and the availability of the river for rafting the logs to mill. This factory was one of a half dozen owned by John Ladue. Logs to be used in oar making were brought by railroad or floated down the St. Joe River from Michigan. "Saginaw Jack" was well known around town as the master of his trade when it came to bringing logs down the river. (In later years, they also made broom handles.)

Feb. 24, 1882 - "H. S. Kirk received a cold bath in 15 feet of ice water last Tues. while taking lessons of Saginaw Jack in riding logs down the St. Joe."

Although a bad fall in 1882 nearly killed Jack, he remained here for a number of years. The factory went out of business about 1895 presumedly because all ash timber in the area was exhausted. Their oar market was principally Europe and Asia.

★ ★ ★

There were two barbers in town in 1882 - Elmer Lowery and F. P. Clark. It is said "both shops enjoy a good patronage each with a force sufficient to dispatch "next" with haste. It requires but a few moments for them to transform an unshorn backwoodsman into a creature resembling human kin."

Montpelier's first ladies hair dressing shop was opened in May, 1882 by Mrs. Maggie Lowry. It is doubtful that she stayed at her work long as tresses were long them, and long meant anything from waist to knee length. Winding a strand was a tedious job and washing was even worse. In 1915, Mrs. Mary Lockhart opened a shop in Montpelier as the first to offer haircuts. Cutting a women's hair not only caused incidents of enraged husbands, but brought forth an avalanche of protests. Short hair was almost the unforgivable sin and women with short hair were considered indecent. In the beginning, curling irons were the only utensils known for curling hair and what a job it was on the long tresses. A hairdressers lot was not a happy one then as most women asked for curls but didn't want their hair cut. The past few years has seen the return of the curling iron, in improved form, and nearly every home now boasts of one.

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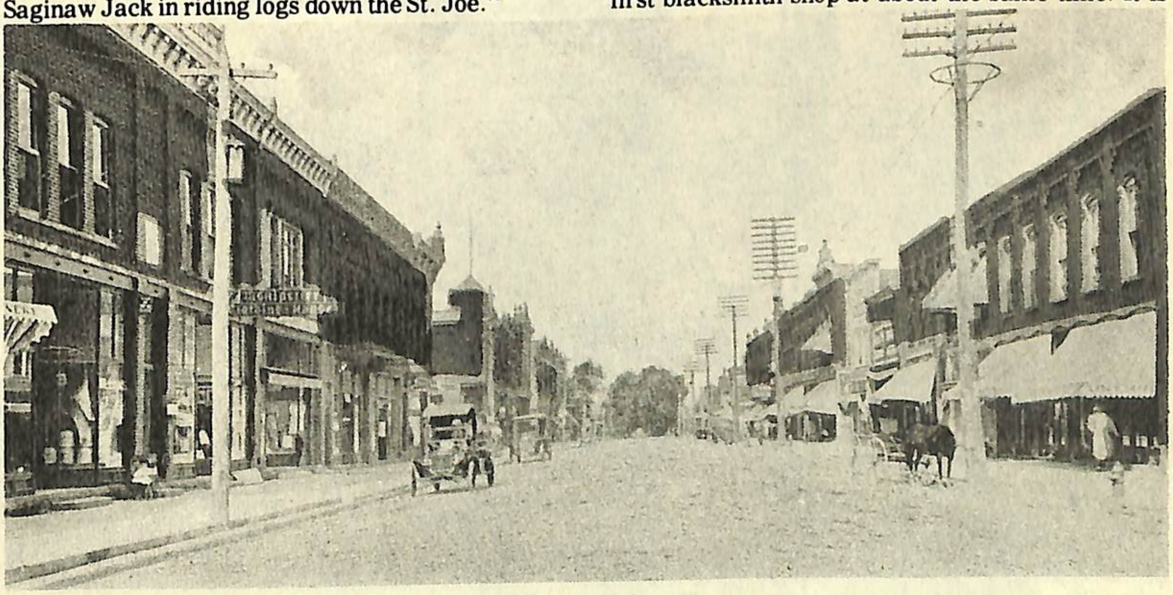
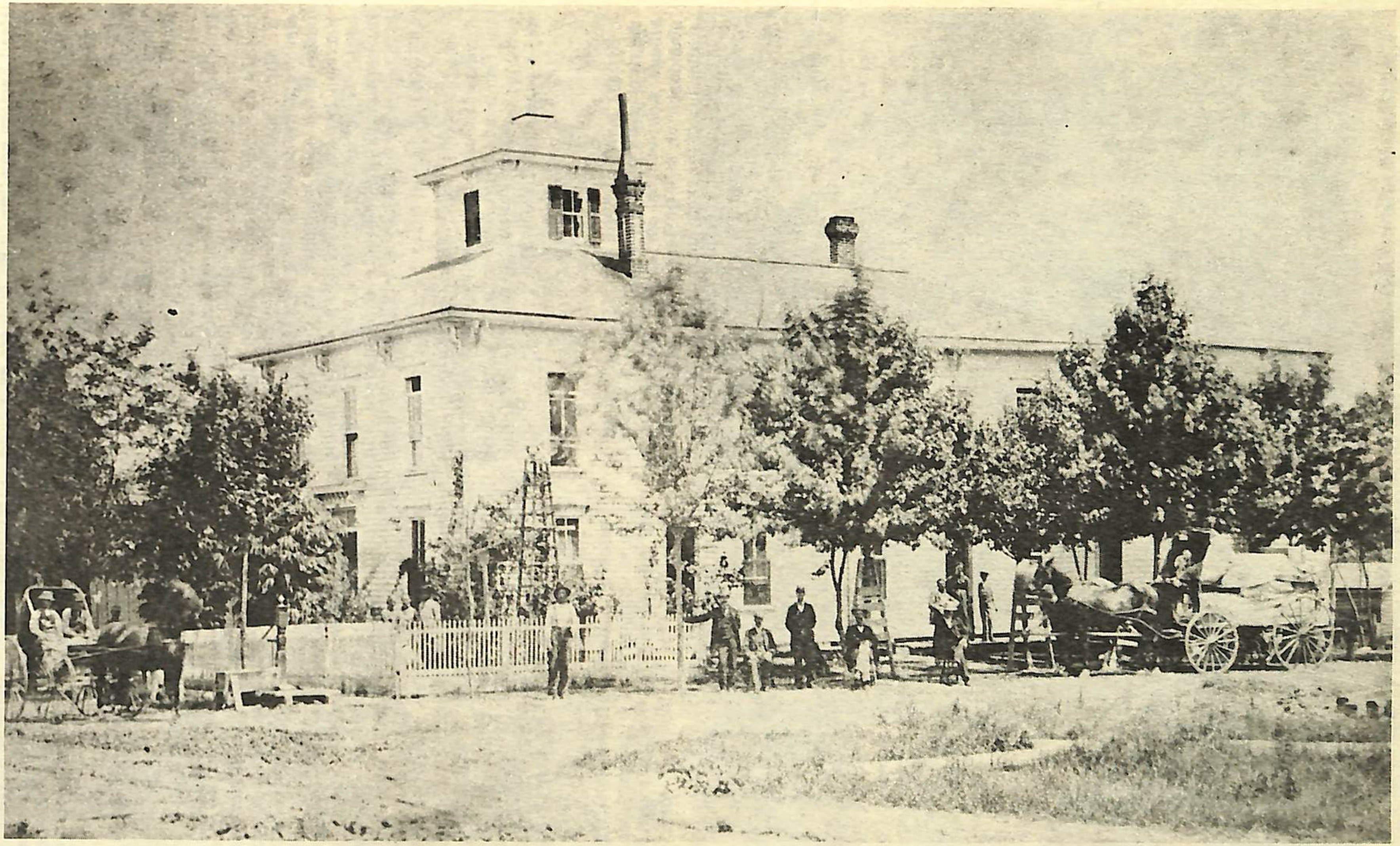
The first hotel in Montpelier was known as the Empire House. It is still standing today and is the oldest business building in town. It was built by Leonard Merry who also owned and operated the first blacksmith shop at about the same time. It is



No. 28 — Main Street looking west. Circa 1912. Photo courtesy of Catherine Dunlap.



No. 29 — Lattanner House, Montpelier's 2nd hotel, also known as the Globe Hotel was built in 1881 and located on the NW corner of Empire and Jefferson Streets. Notice pump on corner. Destroyed by fire in 1890. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.

estimated to have been built between 1845 and 1847. It originally stood at 107 N. Monroe Street where Miller's Body Shop is now located. Ownership changed hands numerous times over the years and it was even a residence prior to 1900 when I. W. Pressler acquired ownership and moved it to its present location. (West Main near the river on the north side.) It is told that until 1900 when it was converted into a feed store, there was walnut wainscoating (paneling) around the lower half of all the rooms. A walnut bar also stood in a corner in the front part on the first floor. In 1941, the Farm Bureau bought the building, remodeled it and used it mainly for its offices until they moved to their new location east of town on Airport Road.

When built and for about 30 years, it was considered a thing of beauty and joy to all and was the "best building in town." By the 1880's, it had acquired a reputation as a meeting place for the area ruffians. At that time, it was owned by a lady named Delilah Owens and was noted for dancing and entertainment. An authentic anecdote connected with the hotel is that a barrel of beer or whiskey stood in the lobby with a tin cup chained to it. For a nickle, the customer could have all he could drink. The building was constructed of yellow poplar, one of the most durable timbers and it is said "it will last forever."

An 1874 map shows that Pleasant Street was once named Merry Street after Leonard Merry when it was in South Montpelier only. In the days when homes were being built, everyone used his own name for his street, thus one long street would change names every few blocks. Finally it was necessary to decide which to use. It is believed that when the street was built on north, that someone not knowing the significance of the name Merry, decided Pleasant sounded better and so it is today. Harrison Street in South Montpelier was called Washington Street and Lawrence was spelled differently - Laurance. West Lawrence had the name Grand Street and South Jonesville from Ohio Street south was Main Street. Monroe had at least three names. It was called Monroe Street between Court and Lawrence, Church Street the next block and a half and Mill Street on north to the river.

Montpelier's second hotel was the Lattanner House, also known as the Globe Hotel. It was built by Mrs. Adam Lattanner in 1881 on the NW corner of Empire and Jefferson Streets. (See photo No. 29 and 71) It was modern and a convenient location to the depot with a large livery stable run in connection with it. It was prosperous and popular and led to the downfall of the Empire House. The building was destroyed by fire in 1890 when Frank Brannan was owner.

Another hotel was built by Mr. Brannan on the same spot. (See photo No. 33) It had 40 rooms including 4 apartments. "Sample rooms" were available to traveling salesmen to use to display their wares to the local citizenry with compliments of the management. In 1907 it was sold to Willard Louden and became the Louden Hotel. It was sold in 1915 to Roy Allen and, thereafter, was known as the Allen Hotel. Noted dignitaries utilizing the hotel over the years were James A. Garfield, William S. McKinley and the world-renowned German opera singer, Madame Schumann-Heinck. An auction was held in the fall of 1960 after which the hotel was torn down. A few years later, a do-it-yourself car wash was installed that is still in operation.

Montpelier's only remaining hotel is the Daniels located on the west side of Empire just north of the depot. It caters primarily to railroaders. The Smith House that sat across the street for years was built by William Gause but sold to a Smith and known, thereafter, by that name. (See photo No. 30) It was destroyed by fire in the late 1960's.

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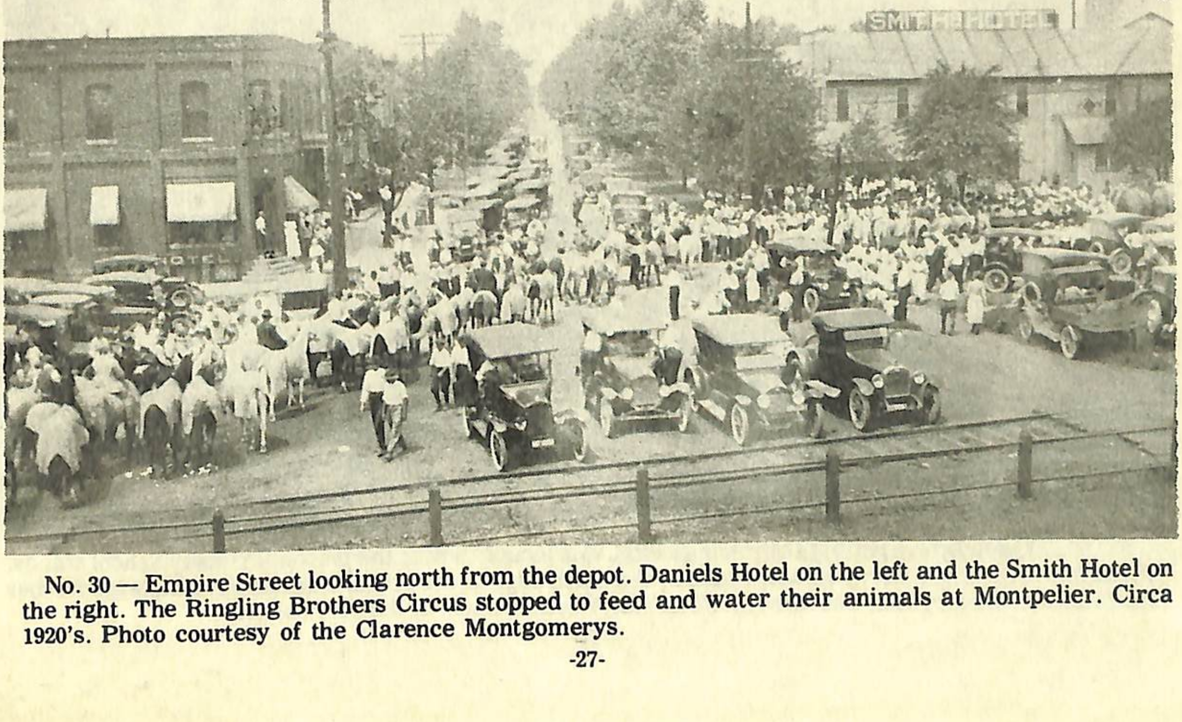
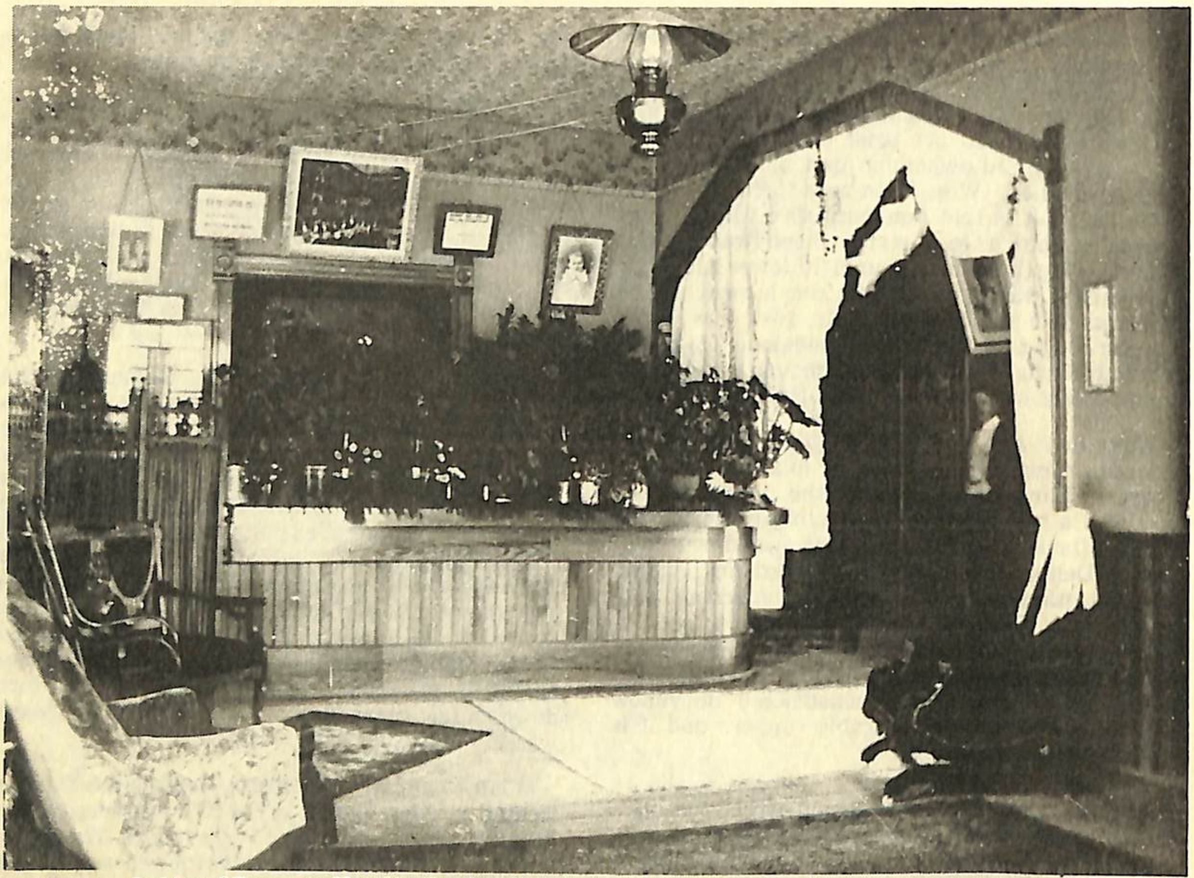
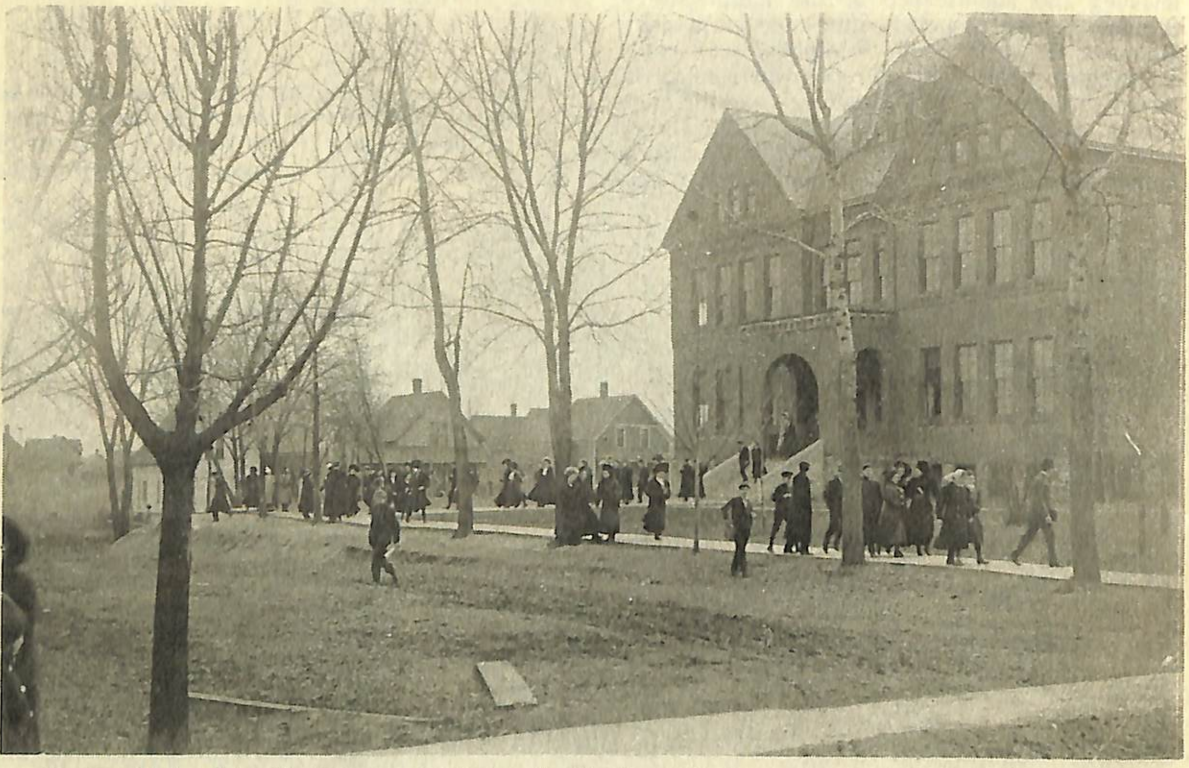
The first post office was opened in Montpelier on December 28, 1846 with Conroy Mallory as postmaster. Presumably, it was located in a corner of his grocery store. Mail messenger service from the



No. 30 — Empire Street looking north from the depot. Daniels Hotel on the left and the Smith Hotel on the right. The Ringling Brothers Circus stopped to feed and water their animals at Montpelier. Circa 1920's. Photo courtesy of the Clarence Montgomerys.



No. 31 — Lobby of Brannon Hotel built after fire destroyed the first hotel known as the Lattanner House. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.



No. 32 — Union School built in 1887 facing north. Was located where the present Primary School stands. Pleasant Street, then Merry Street, ended at the north edge of the school and wasn't completed farther north until Cranberry Run was filled in. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of the Carl Bohners.

post office to the depot was established in 1881. Rural delivery service began in 1902 and village service in 1917. The present post office building located at the SW corner of Empire and Washington Streets was built in 1939.

* * *

Joshua Dobbs started a newspaper in Montpelier in 1852 which lasted only a short time. The first edition of the Montpelier Enterprise was published by F. M. Ford and J. R. Smalley in 1880. George Strayer and David Stauffer started publication on the Montpelier Leader in 1889.

O. W. Carolus purchased the Leader in 1915, from Clyde Thomas. Nine years later, he purchased the Enterprise from Judge Shinn and merged the two newspapers into the present Leader Enterprise.

The newspaper offices were located in numerous placed and burned out one time during the early years. In the 1940's and 50's it was located in the building now occupied by Vyuka's Dress Shop (305 W. Main). It was moved in 1960 to its present location at 325 N. Jonesville Street.

★ ★ ★

It is hard to imagine in this modern age that a bathroom was once a luxury few could afford. The public bath was used by many Montpelier citizenry and was a legitimate business as can be seen from the following article. October 17, 1895 - "J. D. Kriebel has moved his bathroom from the old school building to the I. N. Sheets building on Jonesville. He is prepared to give a few baths daily, except Sunday."

SCHOOLS

The first school in Montpelier was conducted in a log house that was originally built as a residence. It was located, along with another log house, on a little island formed by the mill race. This was sometime in the 1840s and the teacher was Susanna Perkins.

Not long thereafter, a frame structure was erected and this served the needs of the village until 1874 when the new two story building was built on Monroe Street (now residence of the Vern Lougheeds at 320 S. Monroe but looks different as the top burned off years ago.) A. B. Collister, a young lawyer, had the management of the school. He taught the higher grades while Mrs. Sidna Gillis taught the lower grades.

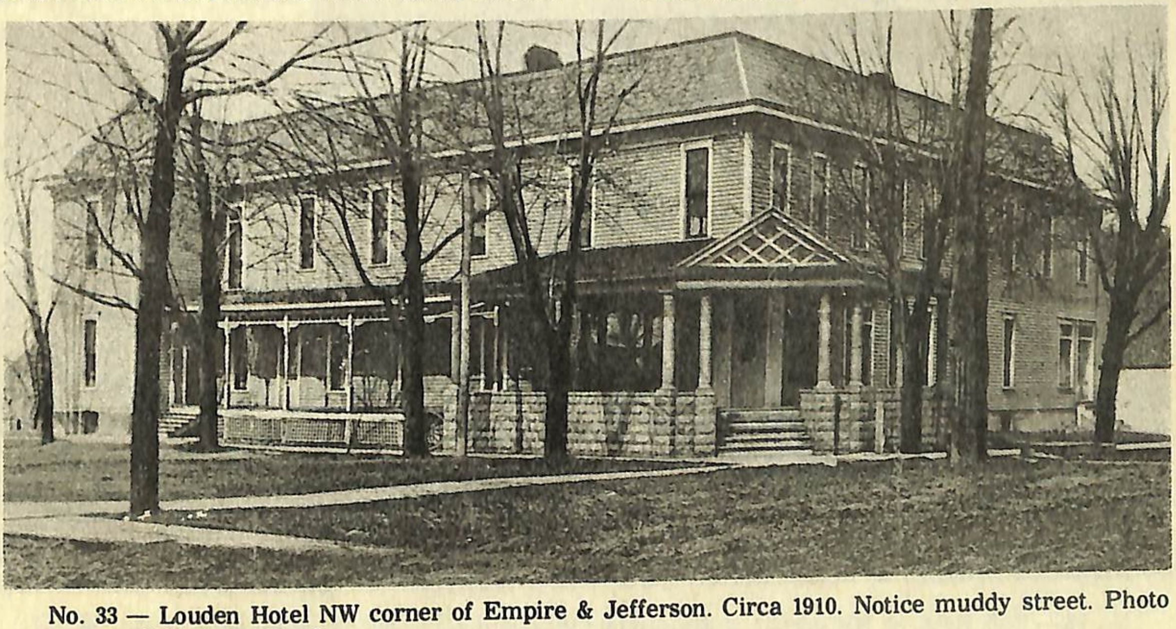
The Monroe Street school soon became overcrowded and for that reason, the village council permitted the school to use the east part of the townhall (formerly the school) as a school room.

In 1881, the village population had so increased that it was necessary to erect another larger building on Monroe Street next to the present one. From this school in 1884, was graduated the first Montpelier High School class.

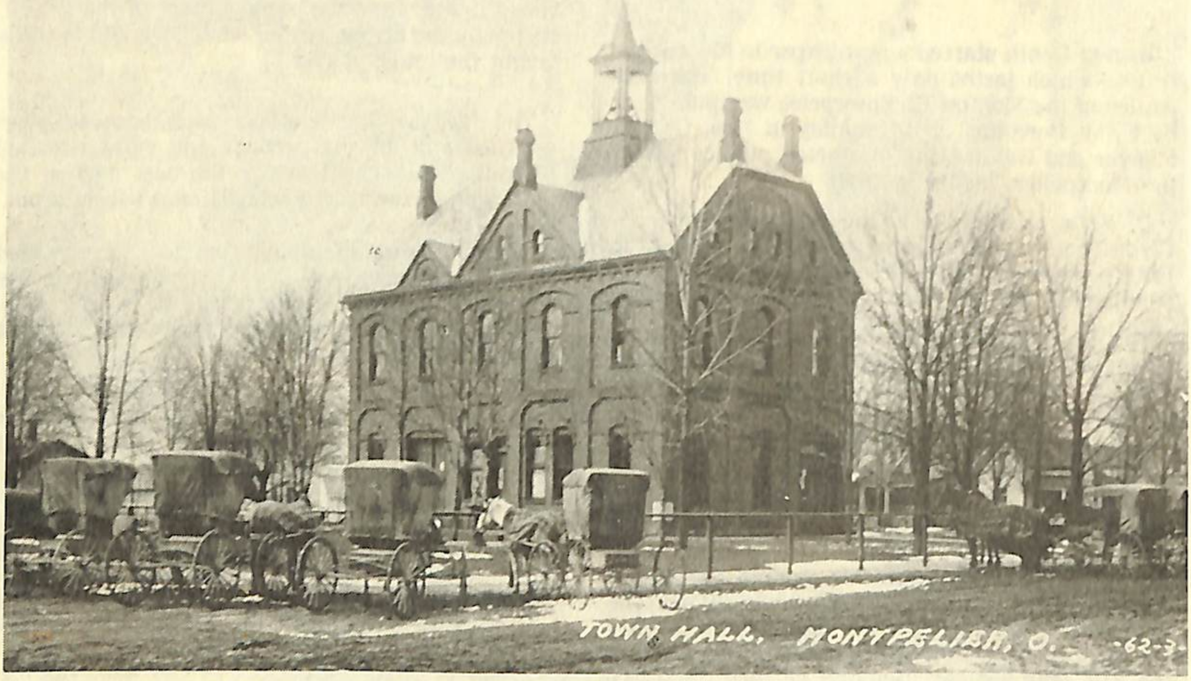
By 1887, a larger building was necessary. A brick structure was erected at the present site of the Platt Street Elementary School and called Union School. This school faced north and was considered out in the country as no streets bordered it and Platt didn't come through to Main Street yet. (See photo No. 15) Later, homes were built east of the school but Pleasant Street stopped there until Cranberry Run was filled in. (See photo No. 32) An addition was necessary in 1902 for the school.

The 300 block of E. Main Street was the site chosen in 1915 for the erection of the high school and thereafter, the Union School housed the elementary grades only. The Union School had served the village for half a century when it was torn down in 1939 to make way for a modern grade school. It was erected at the same site but faced Platt Street. At this same time, an addition was made on the west side of the high school which included our present gymnasium.

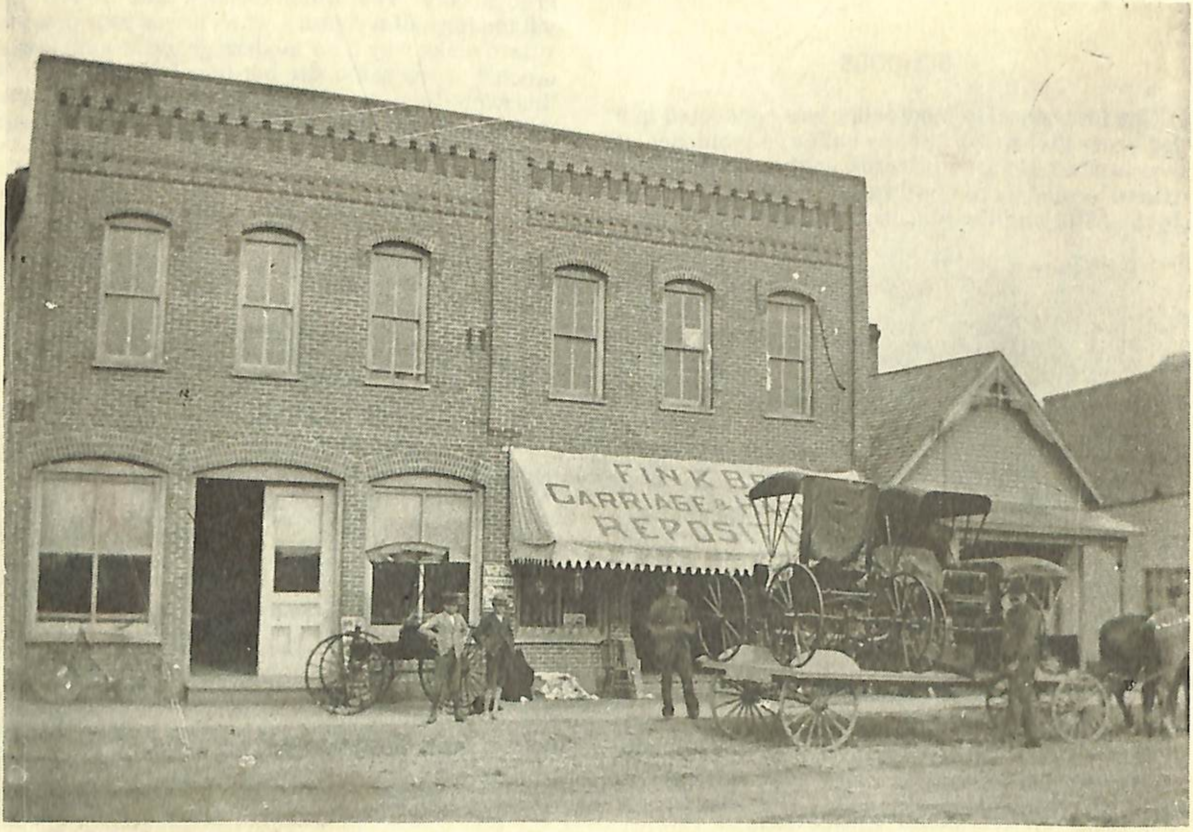
In 1960, an addition was added to the north side of



No. 33 — Louden Hotel NW corner of Empire & Jefferson. Circa 1910. Notice muddy street. Photo courtesy of Chalmer Burd.


TOWN HALL, MONTPELIER, O. -62-3

No. 34 — Townhall built in 1892. Entrance to first floor was on ground level. Notice bell on roof, hitching posts and fountain (Photo 14) near white horse head. Upper floor once used as basketball court with a balcony for spectators. Circa 1909. Photo courtesy Mrs. Dale Humphrey.


FINK BR
CARRIAGE & H
REPOSIT

No. 35 — Fink Bros. on NW corner of Empire and Washington Streets where Loudens is now. It was a frame building with brick front. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.

both the grade school and high school buildings. The former grocery store, east across the street from the high school, was purchased and now serves as offices for the superintendent and school board clerk.

A school, known as Superior School, was built two miles south of Montpelier on Route 576, in 1952 for use by all elementary country students to replace the one-room school houses. An addition was added in 1957. This school was included in the Montpelier School System in the fall of 1966 and is presently used as the middle school for grades 6th through 8th.

The Four County Joint Vocational High School was dedicated in October, 1969. It is located near Archbold in the corner of the 4 northwest counties of Williams, Fulton, Defiance and Henry. Students in their 11th and 12th years are bussed from their respective schools each day but remain a part of their home school system. This school helped to relieve the overcrowded condition at the high school. But, as in years past, the schools are crowded, especially the middle school and the facilities antiquated in the original high school. For the last ten or more years, the kindergarten classes have been held in a church.

The superintendent at the time of the first graduating class in 1884 was W. A. Saunders who served from 1884-87. Since July, 1966, J. Roderick Rice has been superintendent of the Montpelier School System.

The past two years has seen the defeat, by superior township voters, of two proposed bond issues for a new school and-or improvements. Only time will tell what will happen concerning the schools.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

Although Montpelier was platted in 1845, it remained a small crossroads trading post for nearly 30 years. With the prospects of a railroad and the speculation of growth of the village, a municipal government became necessary. The village was, therefore, incorporated in 1875 and officials elected.

The boundaries of the village were established by mutual agreement between the town and township. Duties of prime importance to the village fathers was the construction of streets and the establishment of a "pound" to confine livestock running at large in the village. Nov. 19, 1880 - "The time has expired in which the ordinance allows cows to run at large upon the streets. This is given that all persons may govern themselves accordingly."

The first meeting place of the council was the James Allen drug store located about where Powers & Sons is now at 410 W. Main Street.

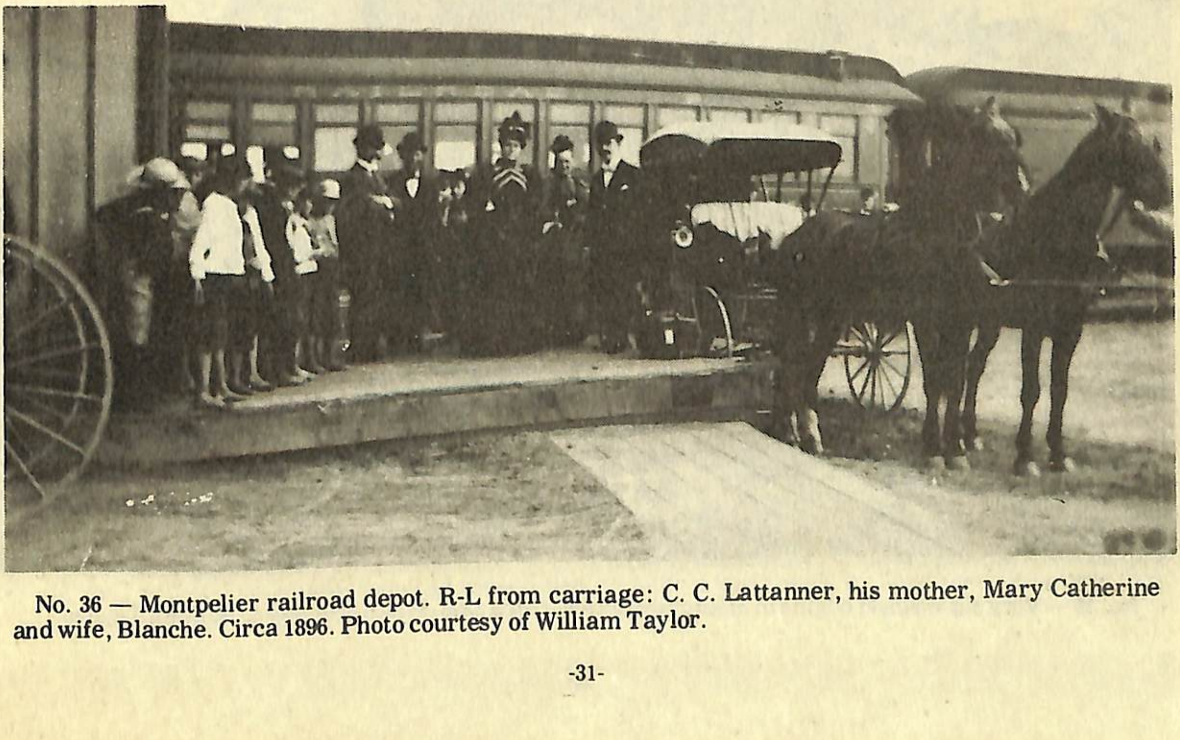
Soon thereafter, they purchased the old school, repaired it and moved it to the public square. It was divided and the west side used for the jail or caliboose as it was called. The east side was the meeting place of the officials. Even though the schools were constantly being enlarged, there was never enough room. The council, therefore, allowed their space to be used for school purposes for several years.

The building served its purpose well for many years, but eventually was in need of repairs as is evident from the 1890 newspaper article.

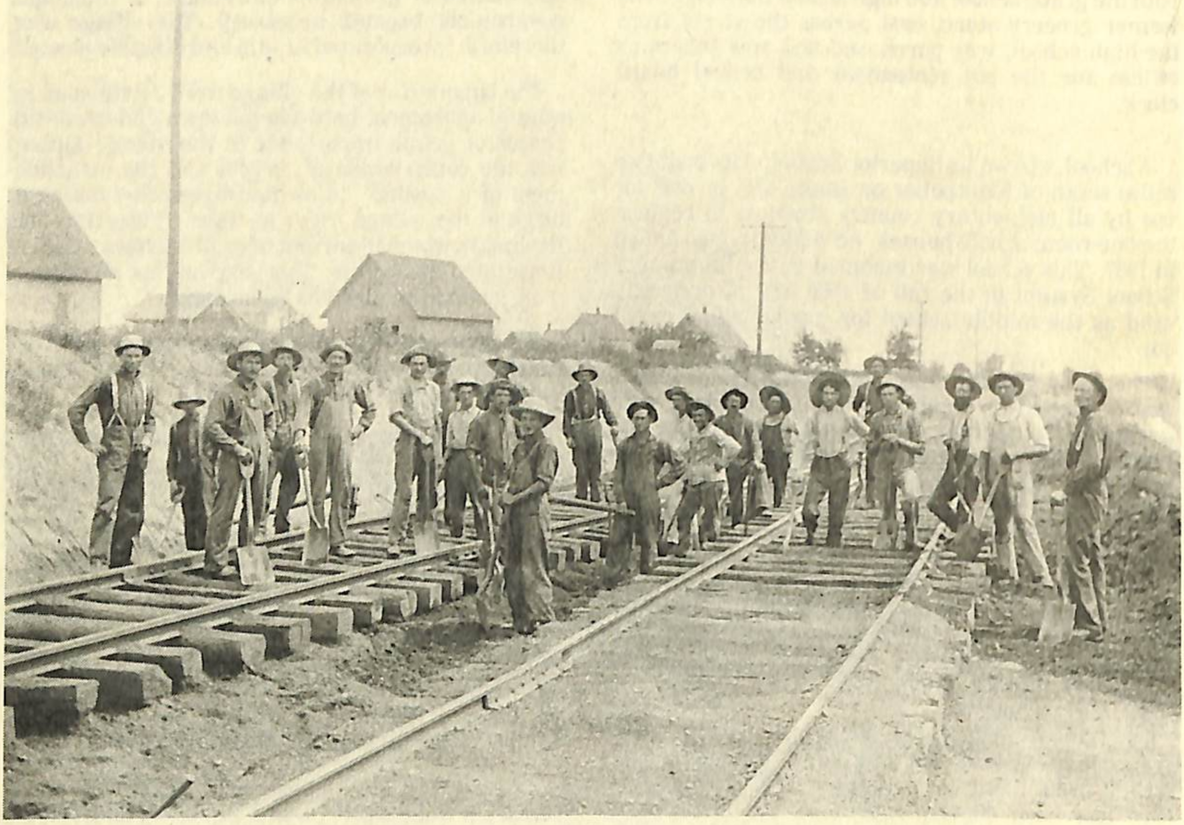
"The village doesn't have street lamps and many residents want them. Others, however, question the need for them when a decent place for the village officials to transact business is more important."

A decision was soon made in favor of a new townhall as a new brick one was built in 1892 at the same location. It is presumed the old was torn down.

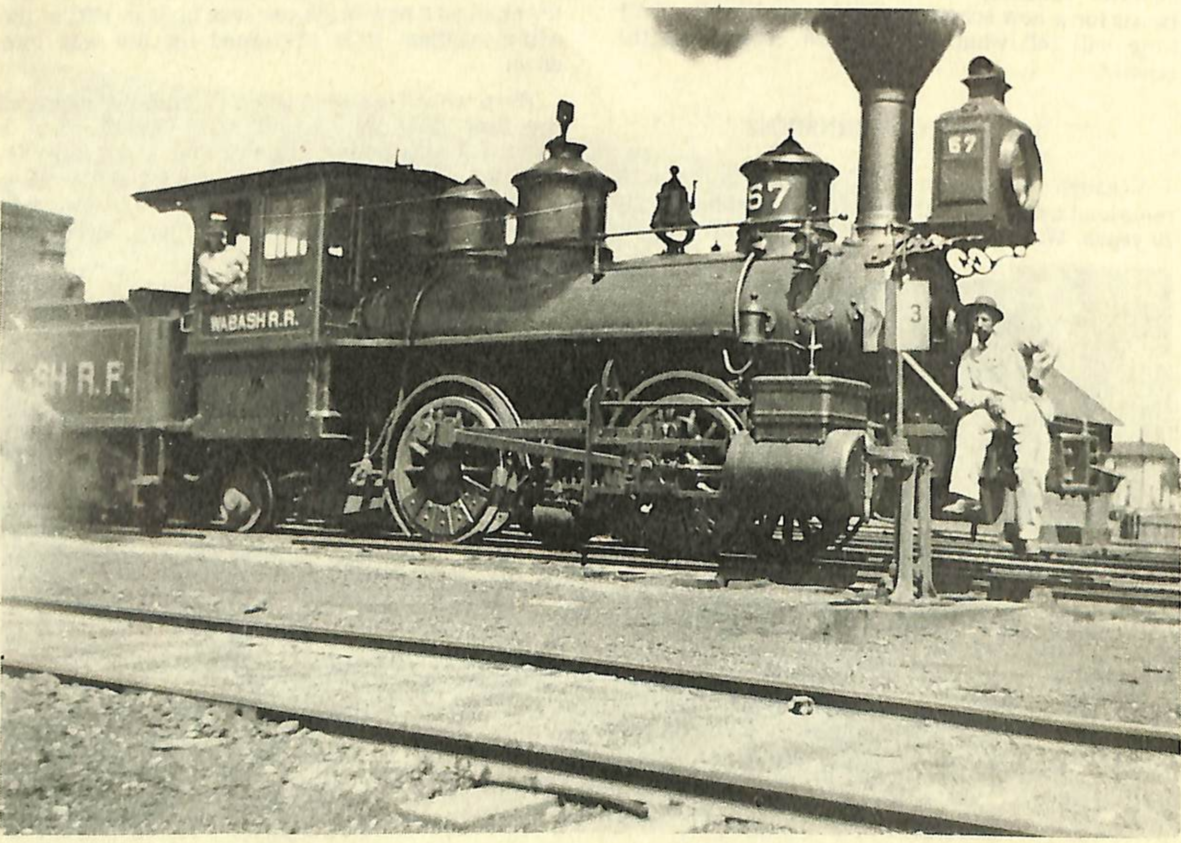
The townhall is still in use. Originally you entered the first floor on ground level. Later when a basement was added, the original floor and windows were raised which made it necessary to climb steps to reach the first floor. The main floor now houses the offices of the mayor, clerk, village ad-



No. 36 — Montpelier railroad depot. R-L from carriage: C. C. Lattanner, his mother, Mary Catherine and wife, Blanche. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.



No. 37 — First tracks laid through Montpelier - looking east. The middle house on the left is on the east side of Harrison Street and now the home of the Dan Bohner family at 624 S. Harrison. Circa 1881. Photo courtesy of the Carl Bohners.



No. 38 — Very old Wabash engine in Montpelier yards. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.

ministrator, township trustees and municipal offices. The jail is no longer used and the police station is in the town proper on the east side in the 100 block of Empire Street. The upstairs of the townhall was closed in 1946 when the fire station was added to the west as the fire escape had to be eliminated. It is presently used for storage. The fire station has recently been vacated as a new station was just completed in the 100 block of South Monroe Street on the west side, south of the Montpelier Locker (Krider Block). The old park had gradually been filled in. It was river bottom and covered the area from Bungalow Court to West Main Street. The river banks were high enough to prevent flooding except in extremely wet weather, but mosquitos were always a problem. The road into the park was by a steep grade off of Washington Street for a short distance and a circle drive as the ball diamond was there. The new station is on street level, just north of the location of the old road. Montpelier has an excellent volunteer fire department with Lewis Hendricks as fire chief.

Three cisterns are located under the pavement on Main Street that were a source of water for the fire department. One is located across from Montgomery Wards, another in front of Wermer's Pet Shop and the third, reputedly, near the Hill residence at 201 E. Main Street.

The first fire department was established in April, 1881. It was known as the "Alert" hook and ladder company with Dr. Filley as foreman (Dr. Filley was the town dentist.) They petitioned the council for a cart, ladders, hooks etc., but proposed to buy their own suits.

Plans are now underway to renovate the old fire station into offices and bring the police department back to the townhall.

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When the railroad, graded only as far as Fayette, failed to materialize due to the depression, it was a great disappointment to the village.

Goodspeed states "so unimportant by the United States census takers had the town been considered that, since it was named, its population had always been merged in that of the township." The year 1880 was the first time Montpelier had an independent place in the United States Census with an official return of 405 inhabitants and placing 7th in population in the county.

As mentioned earlier, Williams County originally was larger in size with Defiance the county seat.

In 1840, to the dismay of the Defiance populace, a tract of virgin timber was surveyed and established as the new county seat. It was named Bryan after its promoter.

Defiance upset over losing the seat of justice, obtained permission to organize Defiance County, thus placing Bryan only three miles from the county line.

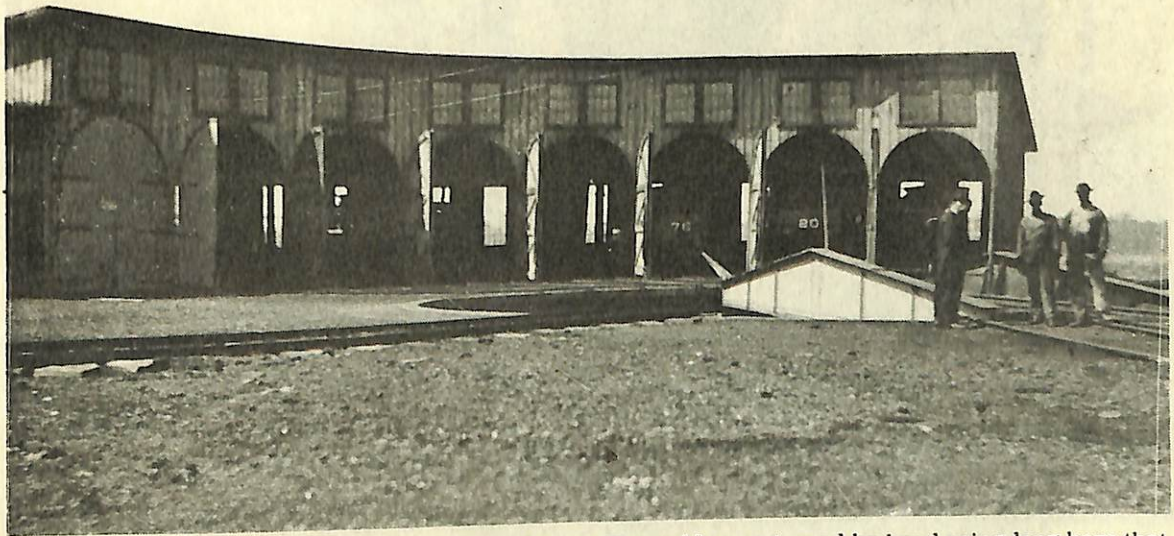
West Unity, platted in 1842, then began urging that they become the county seat as they were now in the center of the county. This controversy continued for 5 years until Fulton County was established.

Montpelier, founded in the meantime, spent the next 40 years trying to convince the state legislature that since they were now in the geographical center of the county, they should be the county seat.

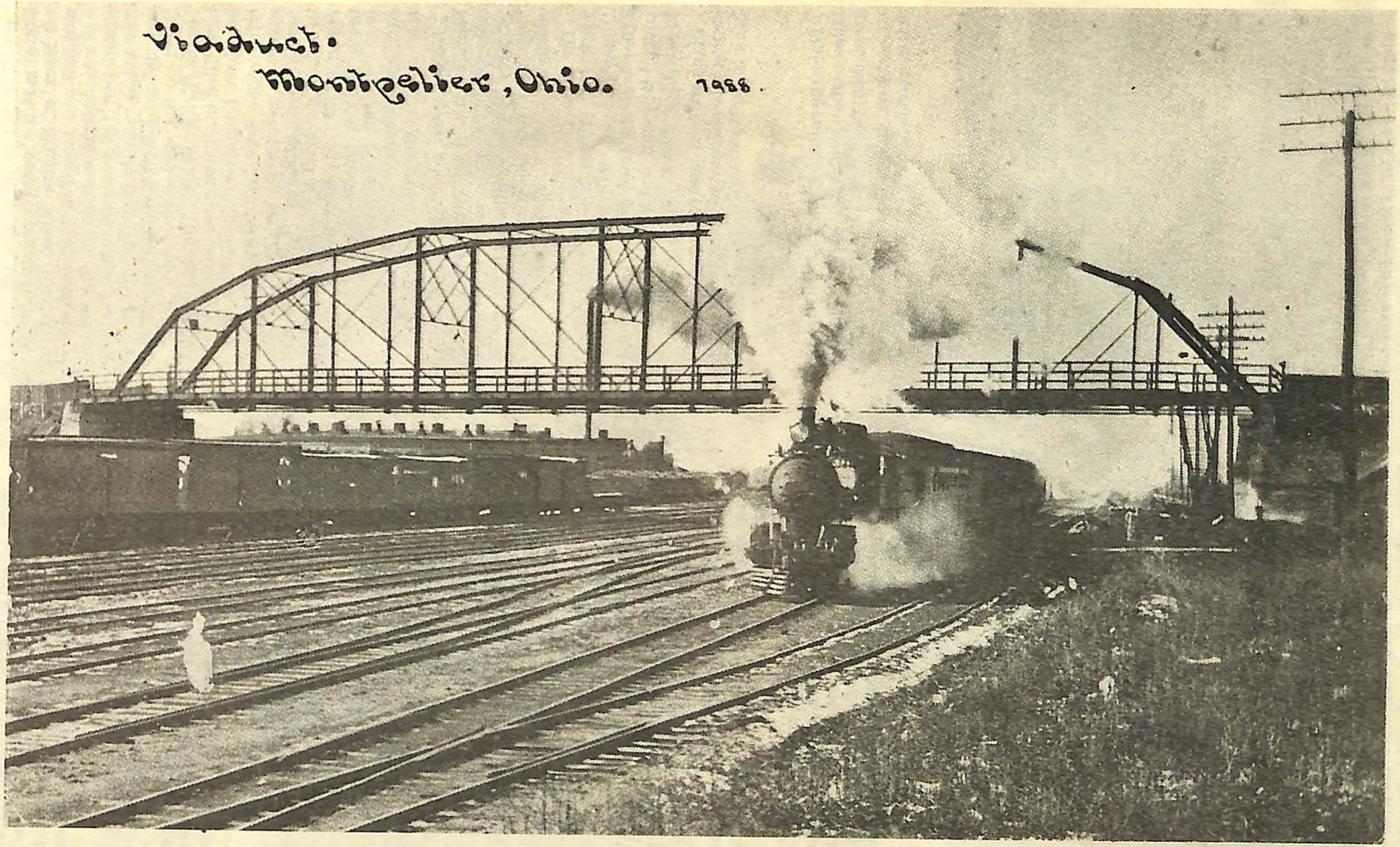
The opening of the Wabash (St. Louis & Pacific) Railroad in 1881 finally brought the boom anticipated a few years earlier. It is said the rapid expansion of the village was unequalled anywhere east of the Mississippi. In a few years Montpelier ranked second only to Bryan, the county seat.

The establishment of the railroad was indeed a drawing card in the fight for the county seat but regretfully to no avail.

The controversary was resolved once and for all when in 1888 Bryan succeeded in getting a bond issue to repair the courthouse. Instead, it was torn down and a new one built over a three year period thus establishing Bryan as the permanent county seat.



No. 39 — Original Montpelier railroad roundhouse. Turntable was turned by hand using long bars that stuck out on each end. Circa 1895. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.


Viaduct.
Montpelier, Ohio.
1988.

No. 40 — Platt Street viaduct with steam engine heading east. Chimneys and pipes can be seen in background on the roof of the roundhouse. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Chalmer Burd.

Montpelier residents were still outraged at the outcome as can be attested by the article appearing in the March 19, 1891 newspaper.

Court House Repairs
Rile Leader Editor

"Going to put a mighty great big time piece in the court house steeple at Bryan, and the people of the county (not Bryan) have got to pay for it. You remember, don't you, that only $50,000.00 was wanted in the first place for repairs? Wonder if a new bell, new clock, marble floors, new court house from top to bottom would come under the head of repairs? Curses, like chickens, come home to roost. Bryan never will profit by any such outlandish deception."

RAILROAD

After the disappointment of the anticipated Canada Southern Railroad through Montpelier in 1875, the town was again all excited in September of 1880 over the new prospects of a railroad.

September, 1880 - It is now an assured fact that the laying of iron will be commenced at Butler as soon as the 10th of next month. A framed picture of the depot and freight house can be seen at Allen & Dorshimer's Drug Store. It is thought by some that it will be erected directly south on the street running by Lattanner's Hotel (Empire Street). A special notice to citizens of Montpelier and surrounding county asks that citizens raise the $4,500.00 needed to finish their subscription in order to secure an elevator. (They had already raised $6,000.00 for the right of way through Superior and Jefferson Townships according to a contract between the citizens of Montpelier and the Railroad company.)

October 1, 1880 - The Detroit division of the Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railroad in order to cross through Butler, Indiana had to cross the Lake Shore & M. S. Railroad. The L. S. & M.S. Railroad officials had not given permission and so one Sunday morning about 100 Wabash employees went to Butler. The main track was cut and a "frog" put in almost before the Lake Shore officials knew there was anything unusual going on. As soon as it was known, the section hands up and down the line as far east as Toledo and about as far west were at once forwarded to the scene to keep them, if possible from effecting their purpose. But the movement had been worked so secretly that the work was well underway by the time they arrived. The number of hands engaged were so great that they dared not offer resistance. The crossing was successfully accomplished. But it was only prevented from being torn up by keeping strict watch for a few nights.

The same problem again arose at Adrian in November. The L. S. & M. S. Railroad served an injunction on the Wabash to prevent them from crossing their tracks. They demanded $195,000.00 in damages, but the Wabash paid $250.00 and crossed.

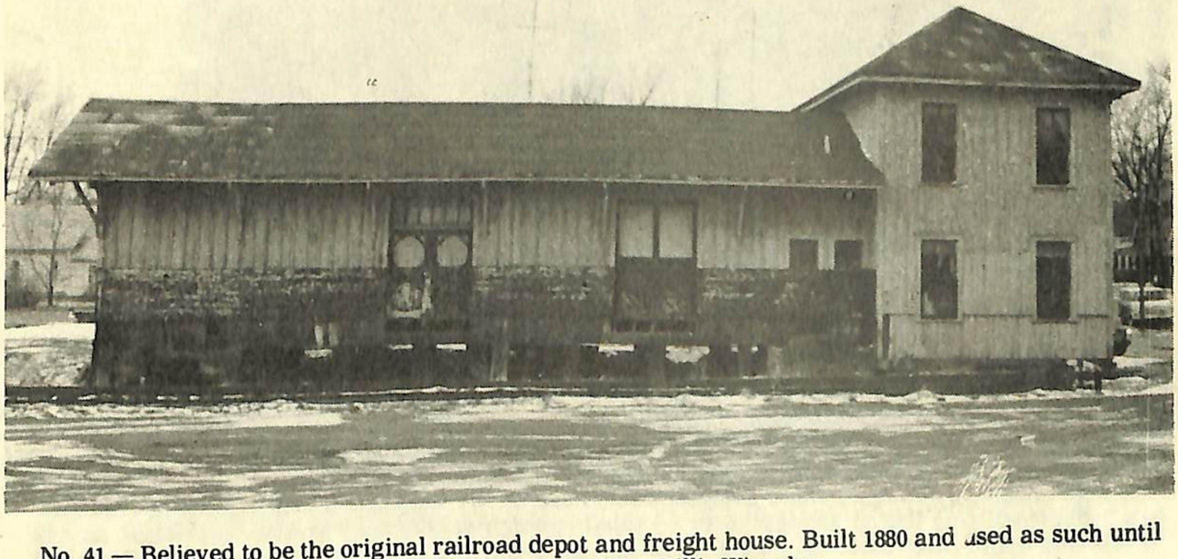
October 15, 1880 - The old bridges, culverts, etc. on the piece of road bed obtained from the Canada Southern Line (graded as far as Fayette in 1875) have been condemned and new timbers are being hauled to the track to take the place of the old. The scarcity of ties on the Butler end of the line has retarded the progress of laying iron.

October 22, 1880 - Piles for the railroad bridge at the St. Joe River bridge are all driven and the work is now ready for the bridge proper which will be brought here from Detroit by way of Butler.

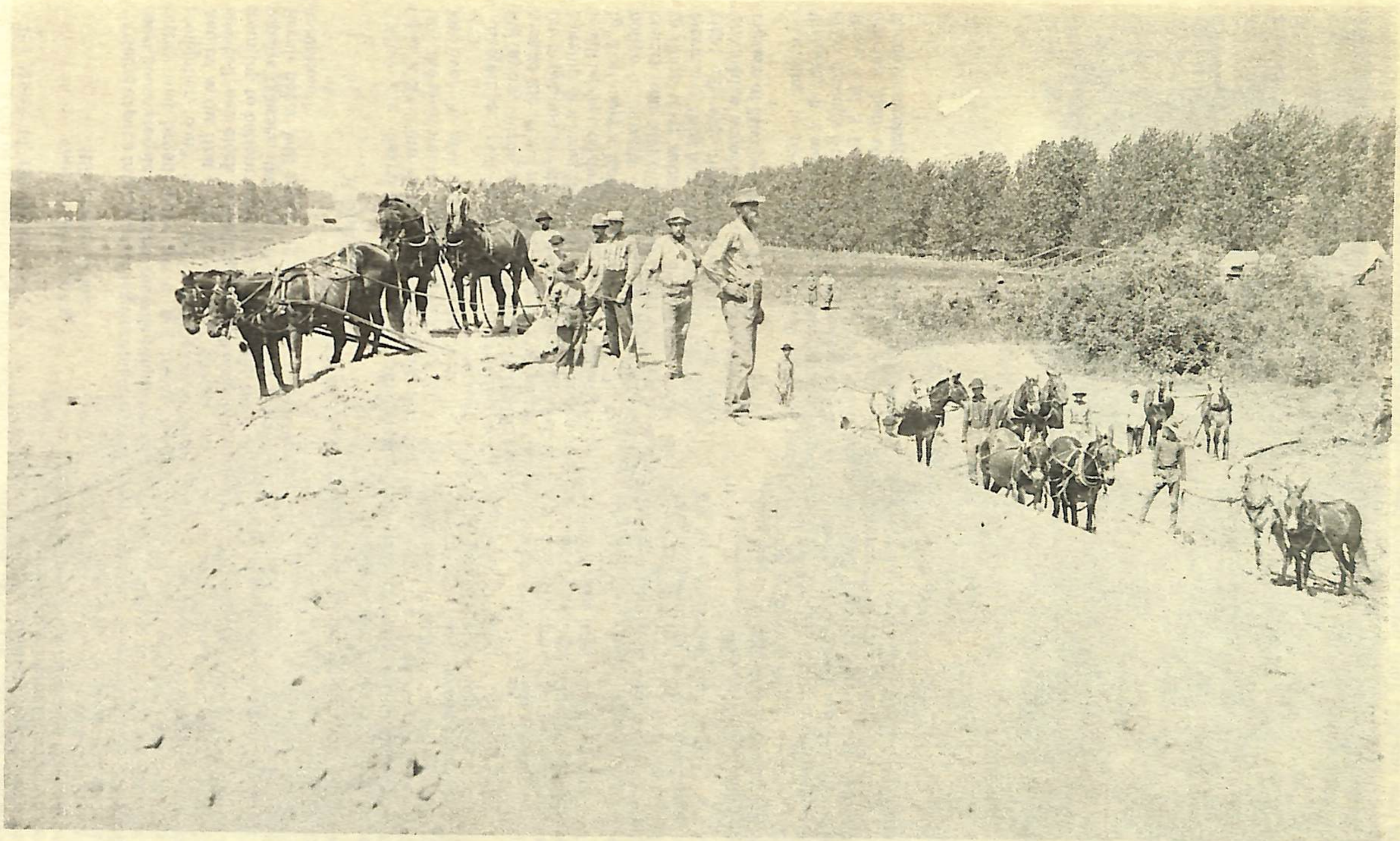
November 19, 1880 - (12 below zero) - The railroad bridge arrived at Bryan. A large a number of teams as could be obtained set to work hauling it here. Weighs about 82,000 lbs. Expect bridge to be ready for iron by end of next week.

December 3, 1880 - The depot building and freight house were framed at Detroit and will be forwarded as soon as iron is laid.

April 15, 1881 - five construction trains on the Detroit & Butler road and business is being pushed with all possible haste. Our railroad which has heretofore been styled the Detroit & Butler was yesterday consolidated with the Wabash.



No. 41 — Believed to be the original railroad depot and freight house. Built 1880 and used as such until 1895. Now stands NW of present depot. Photo courtesy Mrs. Billie Winzeler.



No. 42 — Grading roadbed for Toledo line of the Wabash in 1900. Approximate location back of the Ellis Porter farm on East Main looking east. Cranberry marsh on right. Camp tents set-up in background on right. Teams pulled slip scrapers. Team on top of hill were matched bays, Dick and Jack. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Grace E. Lyons.

April 22, 1881 - The Wabash Railroad Company advertised for 50,000 ties. (The extremely cold winter and lack of ties slowed the completion of the railroad.)

April 29, 1881 - About 1,000 men working on the unfinished part of the railroad between Butler and Montpelier. Wages are $1.50 a day and the value of the railroad is $6,000.00 a mile. (See photo No. 37)

July 1, 1881 - Depot ready. A carload of Cincinnati buggies were received at the station. A special train bearing some of the Wabash Officials passed through at lightening speed.

July 15, 1881 - Regular trains placed on railroad. Two trains a day.

August 19, 1881 - Regular passenger and freight trains put in motion on the road Monday.

But at last the railroad was a reality and with it the first of many wrecks was recorded.

"A slight smash up occurred on the R. R. near Blakeslee whereby a couple of cows were instantly converted into mince meat and the engine was thrown from the track."

October 21, 1881 - Railroad will commence carrying the mail next Monday.

November 4, 1881 - The sink hole at the Schaffer swamp (John Kreisher farm now) although not over 200 feet wide, has had over 6,000 car loads of gravel and about 20,000 feet of timber thrown into its unknown depths since June. (The sink hole caused trouble for years holding up the train numerous times especially after a heavy rain. It was finally drained into a township ditch in 1883.)

Dec. 2, 1881 - After several freez-outs, the railroad company have finally put up a coal stove in the waiting room at the depot to the satisfaction of the traveling public.

With the opening of the railroad through Montpelier, Goodspeed reports in 1882, that as a grain, wool and livestock market, and counting the value of merchandise received and of manufactured goods shipped, it is now the most important town on the line, Butler possibly excepted.

In 1883, the Wabash completed the Montpelier-Chicago extension. A round-house was built in 1893 on twenty-five acres of land acquired for the purpose. (See Photo No. 39)

In 1901, the line to Toledo was completed. (See photo No. 42) An account entitled "At work all along the new line" gives details.

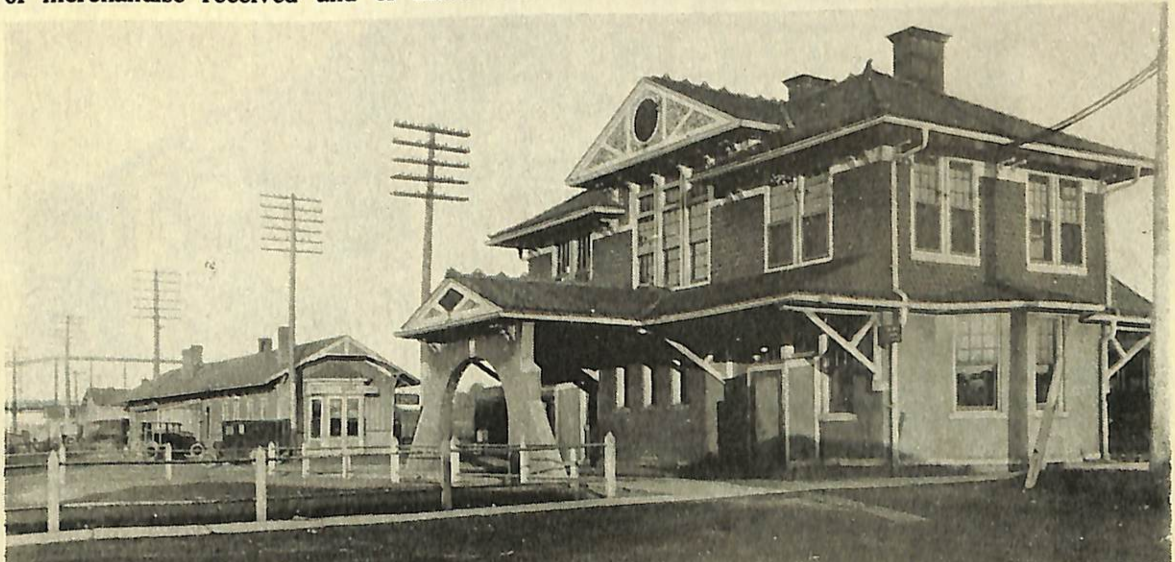
"All last week, there were fresh arrivals daily at this station of horses, mules, steam shovel, scrapers, dump cars, pony engines, tools and trappings of all kinds to be used by the subcontractors in the construction of the new Wabash line from here to Toledo. Sunday, the stock yards, livery barns and a portion of the stalls at the fairground swarmed with mules and horses. They were the finest lot of animals ever gotten together for railroad grading. All were in prime condition for the start out, which began Monday.

Sunday was a day devoted to loading camp equipment, tools, etc. on wagons. Early Monday morning, a large detachment of 40 wagons and 100 horses and mules left for Wauseon. Tuesday, another detachment of about the same proportion left for points along the line between here and West Unity while a large focus remained here to work on the heavy fill for double tract across Cranberry Run.

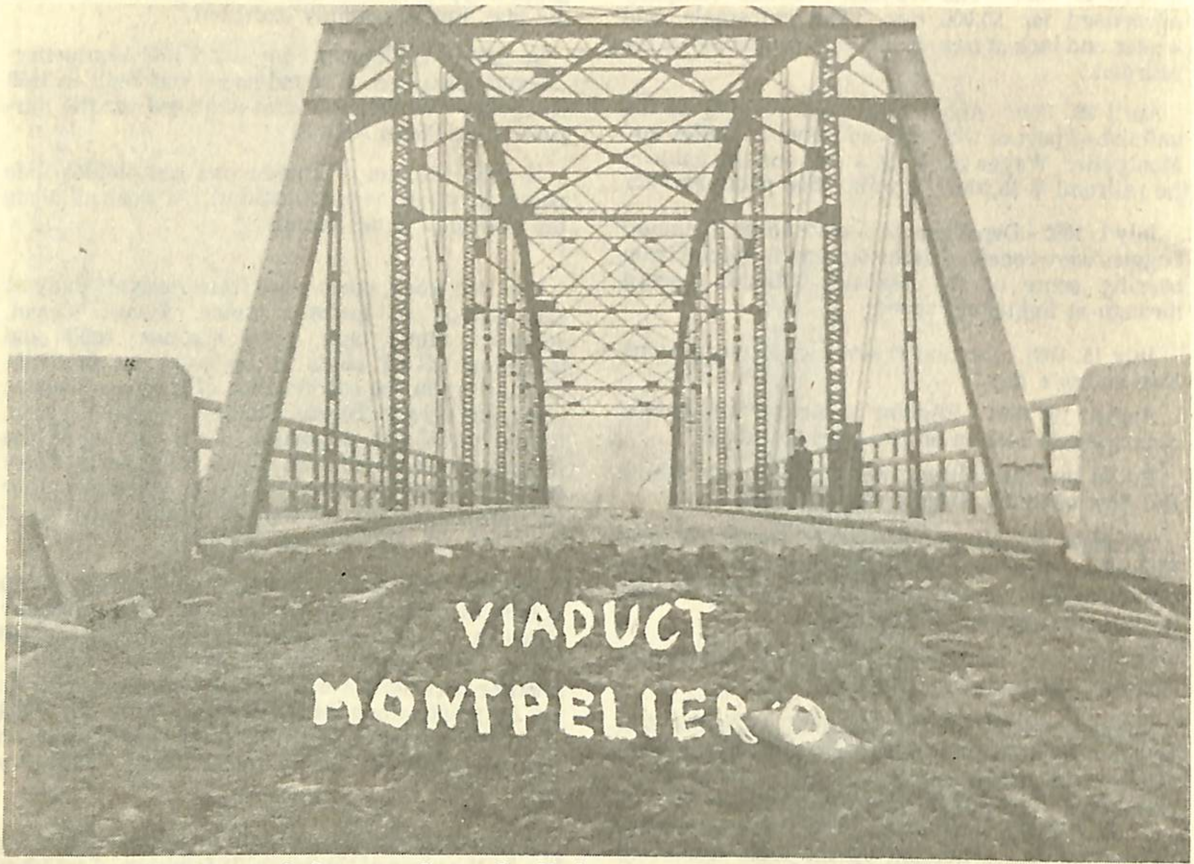
Between 500 and 600 men will be at work along the line by the close of the week. If fairly good weather is assured, the grading will be done by the middle of July.

A large yard for the handling of ties, rails, etc. is being laid out at Maumee and track-laying will be done from both directions, east and west. Right-of-way men are actively engaged, clearing up titles as fast as possible.

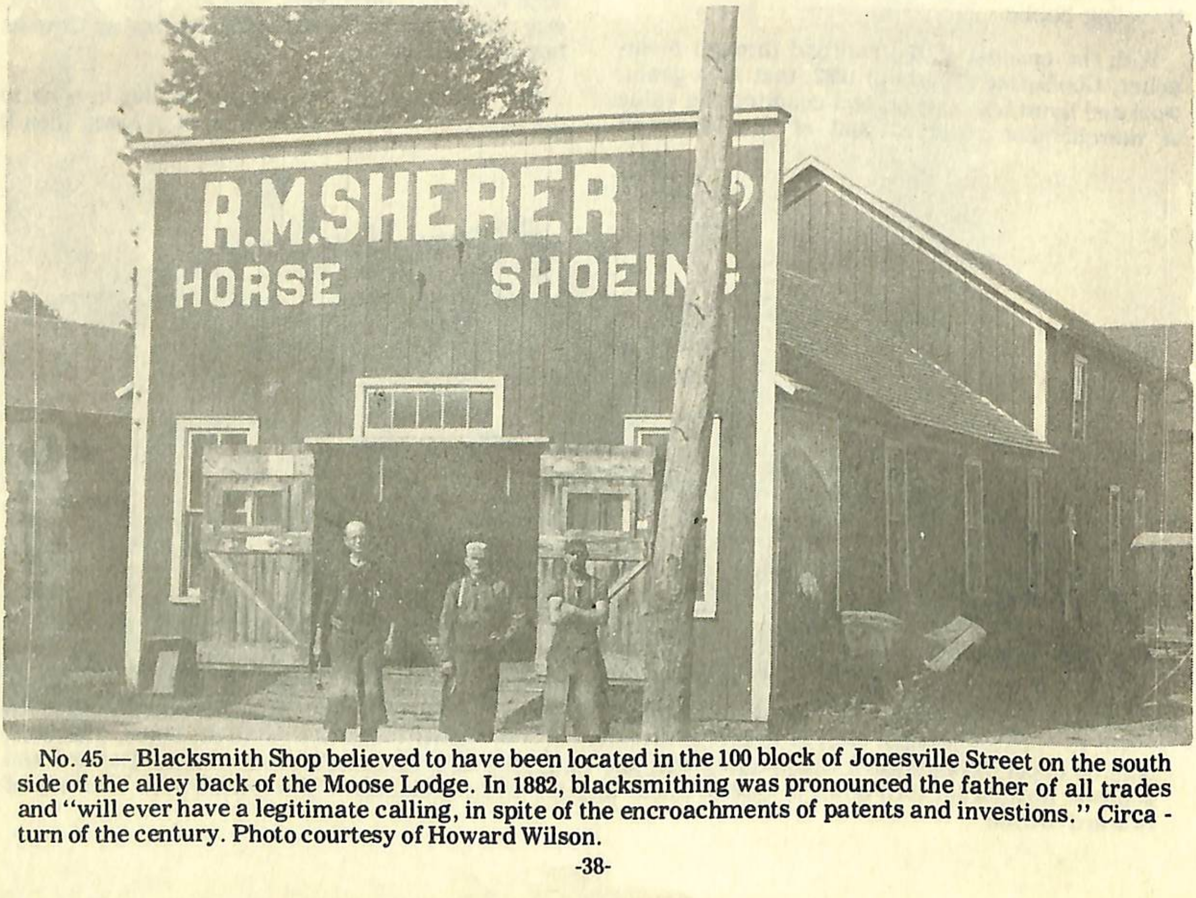
The road gets on to the quarter section line out to the east curve, about one mile east of town, then it



No. 43 — Present depot built in 1895. The architect also designed Union Station in St. Louis, Missouri. Sign on depot says Western Union Telegraph and Cable Service. Building on left was the Ballard and Johnson Restaurant torn down in 1936 to make way for office buildings. Circa 1920. Photo courtesy of Howard Wilson.



No. 44 — Platt Street viaduct over the tracks. Notice the mud they had to content with. Circa 1908. Photo courtesy of the Paul Underwoods.



No. 45 — Blacksmith Shop believed to have been located in the 100 block of Jonesville Street on the south side of the alley back of the Moose Lodge. In 1882, blacksmithing was pronounced the father of all trades and "will ever have a legitimate calling, in spite of the encroachments of patents and investions." Circa - turn of the century. Photo courtesy of Howard Wilson.

takes a straight scoot to West Unity, a distance of 9 miles. From there it defects to the south slightly until it reaches Wauseon and Maumee, where at the latter named place it will intersect the old Wabash line running out from Toledo."

The present depot was built in 1895 and the old one moved and used as a freight house. Facts seem to indicate that the building located NW of the present depot was the original depot but probably a single story structure in the beginning. (See Photo No. 41)

The topic of discussion in December 1906 was whether the viaduct over the Wabash tracks should be wooden or steel. A short time later a steel one was built with a tunnel under the road on Primrose Alley so citizens wouldn't need to drive around. This one served the public until 1962 when the present bridge was built. The incline on the original viaduct began at Court Street but the present one begins at Lawrence and thus Court Street no longer goes clear across town but is broken off at the viaduct incline. (See photos No. 40 and 44)

In 1908, the shops were brought here from Ashley, Indiana. The Division Offices were brought to Montpelier in 1917 and located downtown primarily above the Farmers & Merchants Bank Building. They remained downtown until 1936 when new offices were built to the east of the depot and remain today. The building that housed the Ballard and Johnson Restaurant was torn down to make way for the new office buildings. (See photo No. 43)

In 1925, land was purchased east of Montpelier and a viaduct constructed. It is still in use but badly in need of repairs. The state has discussed improvements on the highway between the Ace Corners and Montpelier (20A) for the last 4 or 5 years and a new bridge is included in the plans. Montpelier's citizens have mixed feelings on the new road with one group wanting the widened road to come through to Platt Street. The other group, wanting to preserve the beauty of tree lined Main Street, feel it is only necessary to bring the new road to the edge of Montpelier or no farther than the fairgrounds.

The Wabash Railroad was consolidated in 1964 and became the Norfolk and Western Railroad with the main headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia. Passenger service was discontinued through Montpelier in 1971. The once thriving business offices soon became obsolete as the division office was transferred to Fort Wayne, Indiana. There is now only a small office force with trainmaster and clerk remaining.

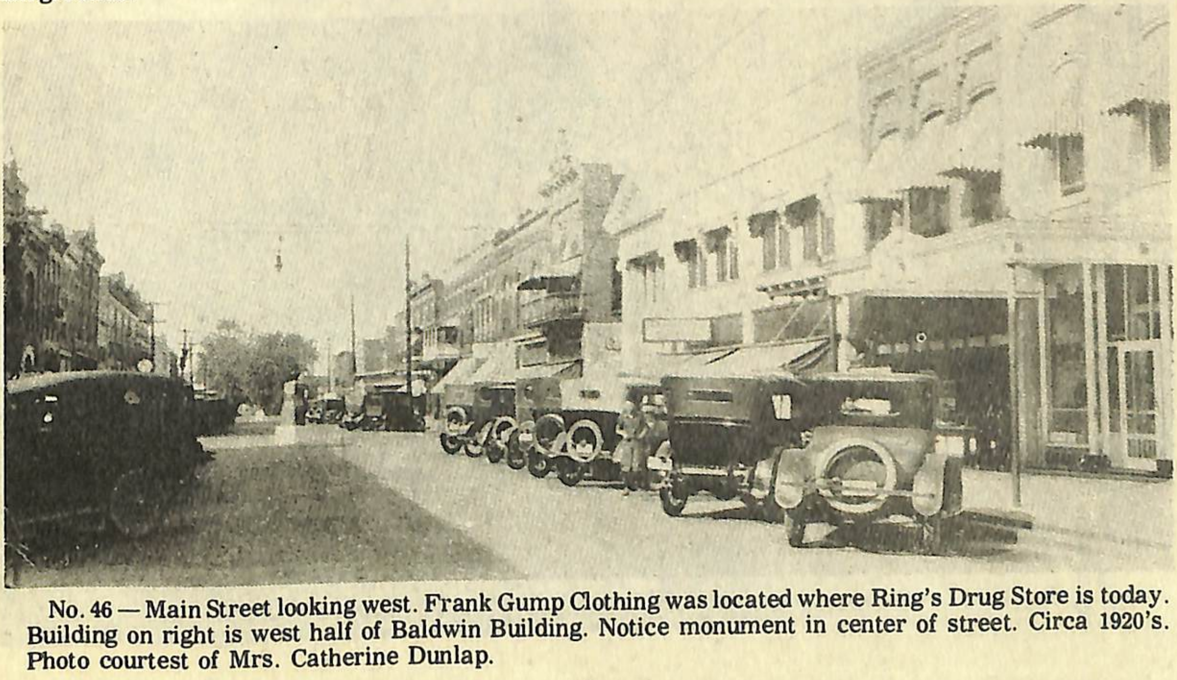
MONTPELIER IN THE 1880'S

Many frame buildings were built and used by the early merchants and professional people and changed hands often. They were moved to different locations frequently as there weren't many wires and large trees to contend with back then. The home at the NE corner of Board and Lawrence Streets, at one time, stood where the F & M Bank is now located.

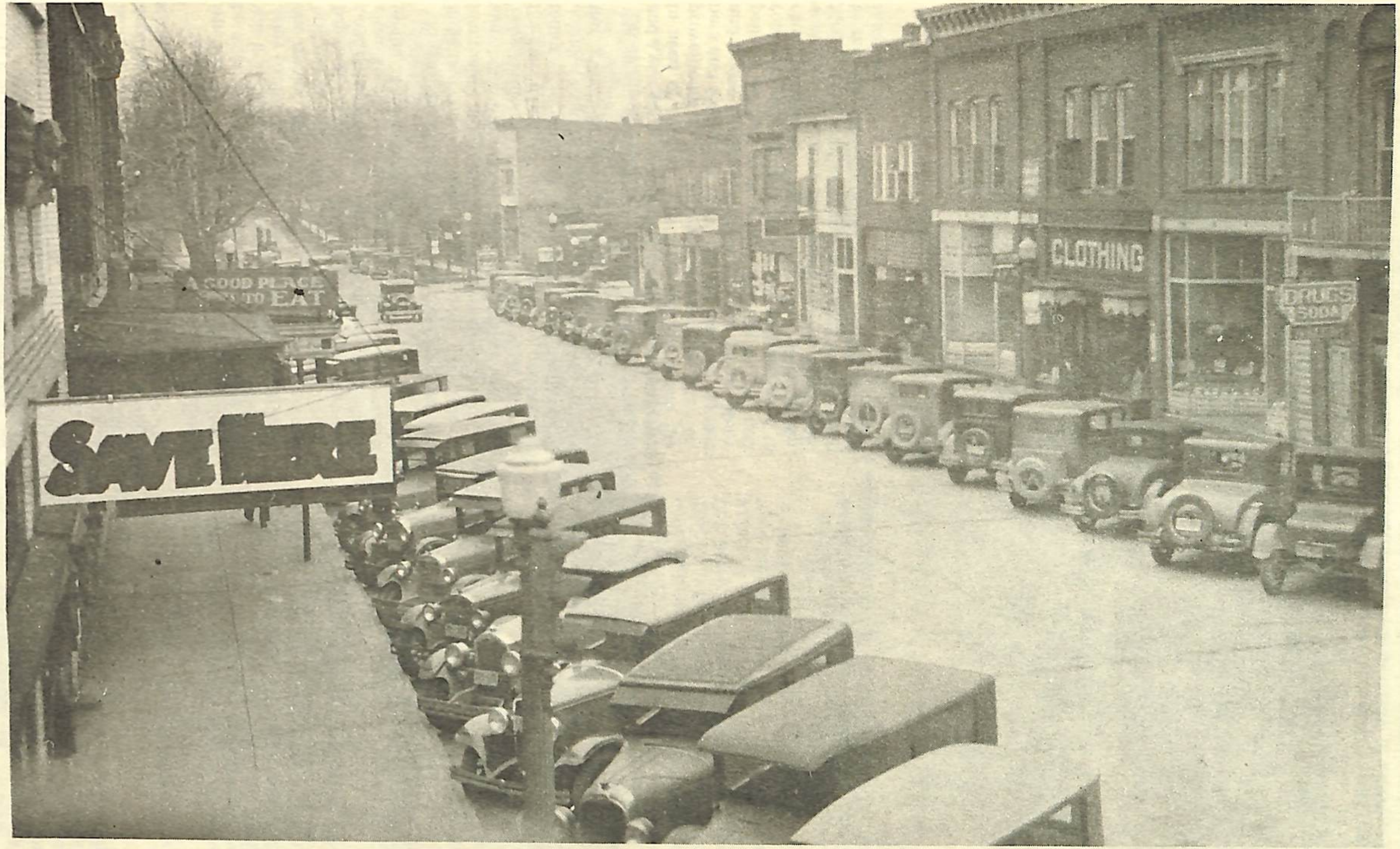
Nov. 4, 1881 - The small building originally built for a meat market by Mr. Mott though young in years has been subjected to several changes. This week it was been moved for the 5th time and in its shattering condition is finally owned by Mr. Shouf and occupied as a saloon.

The first brick business block was built by Joseph and Ambrose Baldwin. September 24, 1880 - "The dirt is being removed from the ground where the Messrs Baldwin are going to build and put in different places on our streets for repairs." Iron columns for the building were cast at the Montpelier foundry. The Daso Brothers did the trowel work with brick supplied from the farm of Samuel Hause. The water for the mortar was hauled from nearby Cranberry Run by a pair of mules. By November 12, a tin roof was put in place by Stauffer & Son hardware merchants and the carpenters were working on finishing the inside.

In December, although not yet completed, the Baldwin Bros. let the east hall be used for a public dinner for the R. R. employees. The ladies of the



No. 46 — Main Street looking west. Frank Gump Clothing was located where Ring's Drug Store is today. Building on right is west half of Baldwin Building. Notice monument in center of street. Circa 1920's. Photo courtest of Mrs. Catherine Dunlap.


A GOOD PLACE TO EAT
SAVE HERE
CLOTHING
DRUGS SODA

No. 47 — Main Street looking east taken from the balcony above the present Insurance Building located at 301 W. Main. Sign on left reads A Good Place to Eat - Gumps and is the present location of the Unique Buffet Bar. On right was a clothing and drug store. The 2 story building on the right in the distance was torn down to make way for the Shell Service Station. Circa 1930's. Photo courtesy Ilene Taylor.

town served the meal to about 100 men to commemorate the official opening of the railroad service in Montpelier.

The Baldwin Bros. were in the poultry trade and had a good business in December of 1881 as this article attests.

"Baldwin Bros. are pressing the poultry trade with great vigor. It is a sight to visit their slaughter and packing house. Nearly every day they ship a ton or more to the Boston market to a house that has had their trade for years. It certainly is a trade of itself and they understand the business." (They sold out to an Adrian party in Nov. 1883.)

The "Baldwin Building" as it was called, is still standing. Present occupants at 215-17 West Main are Rozells Flower Shop in the east side and the Unique Buffet Bar on the west.

The initiative of the Baldwin Brothers was all that was needed to start others constructing brick blocks.

The town continued to grow by leaps and bounds and houses to rent were in great demand. More than 50 residences went up in the summer but they were not adequate to supply the demand for room.

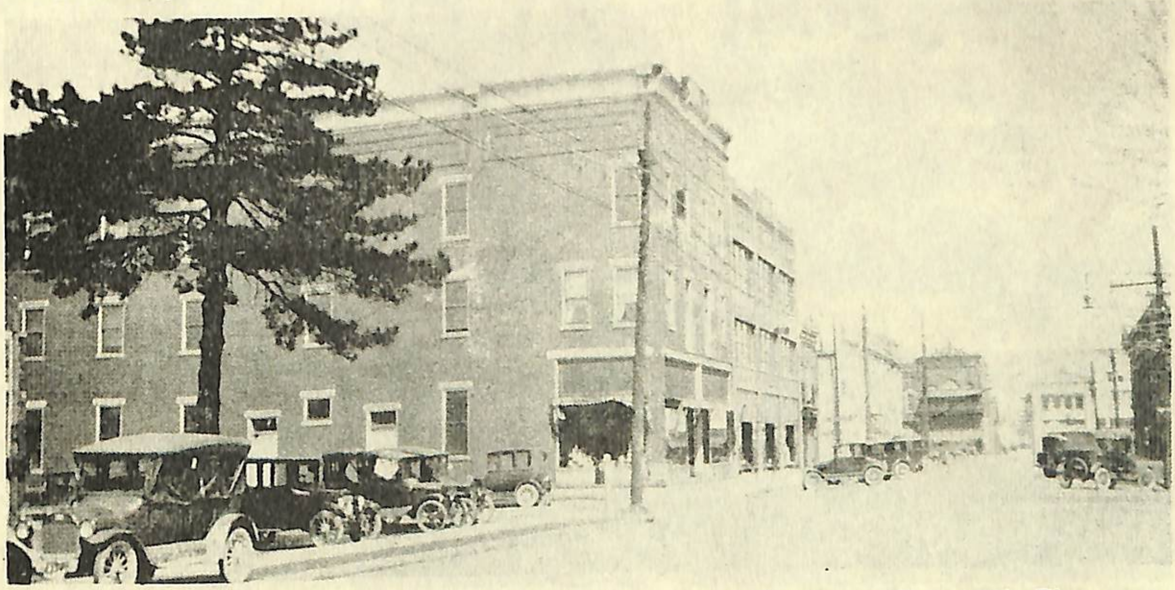
In August, 1881, four buildings burned to the ground. This fire, along with one in January, leveled everything on the South side of Main Street except 2 residences and the Gratz grist mill. With no actual fire fighting equipment, nothing could be done but try and save the contents.

Nov. 4, 1881 - Will someone inform us where the families that will necessarily move here with the new oar & handle factory are to find houses to live in? At least a hundred extra dwellings are needed now and if the monied men of this place intend to encourage emigration here, some move must be made in this direction. Not every man will be willing to pay $6.00 a month for a place just large enough to sleep in.

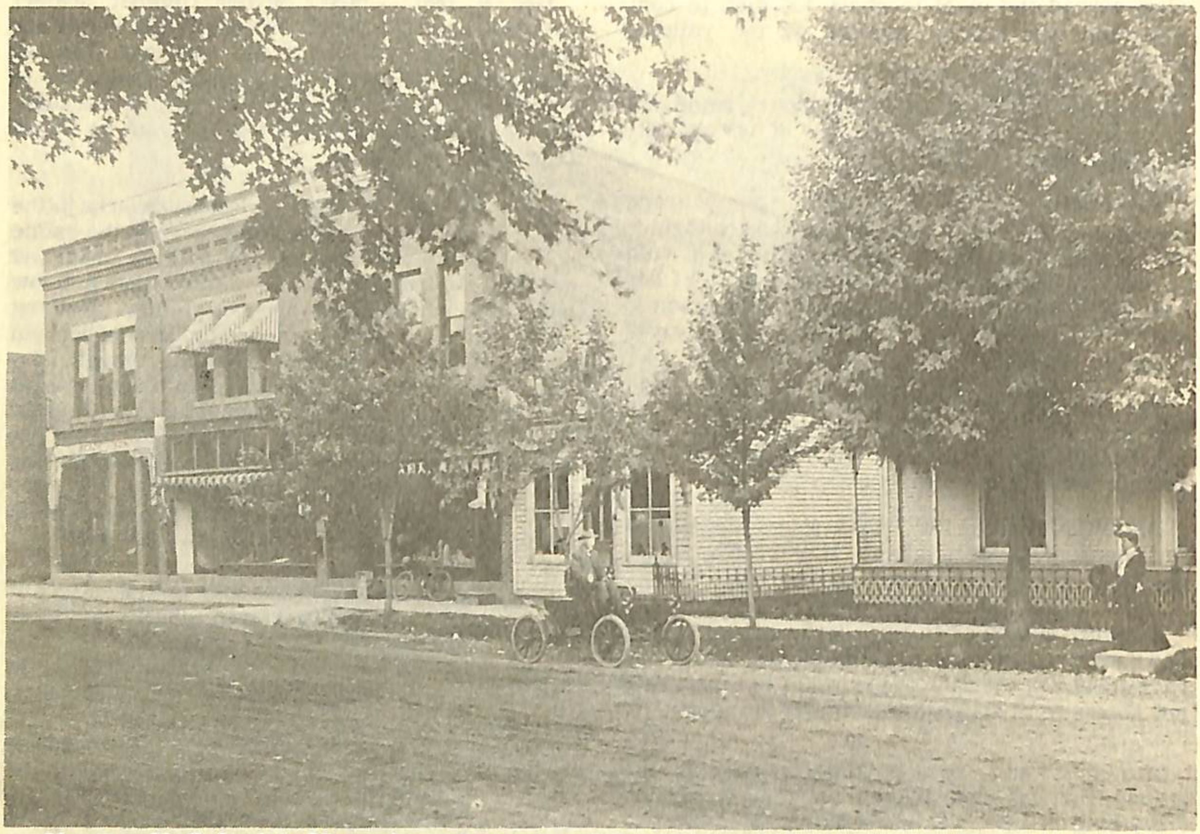
Dec. 9, 1881 - Jacob Snyder (lumber dealer) proposes to utilize the St. Joe River this winter for the purpose of supplying his mill with logs. The bad condition of the roads has obliged all teamsters to stop hauling, but as lumber is in such great demand, Mr. Snyder proposes to supply the want as far as possible.

Dec. 16, 1881 - One of the oldest landmarks in the old business district burned (west side of the public square). Building was owned by William Smith and occupied by him as a saloon and residence below and above by John Lesnet photo gallery. Nothing was saved of Lesnet's stock. Smith's household goods and saloon fixtures all saved though in a damaged condition owing to the rain that was at that time pouring down. Empire House was in great danger and would have shared a like fate had it not been for a couple of hand force pumps which was vigorously used by a few willing hands. Thus one after another they go down making a total of 16 buildings burned in our village within a year.

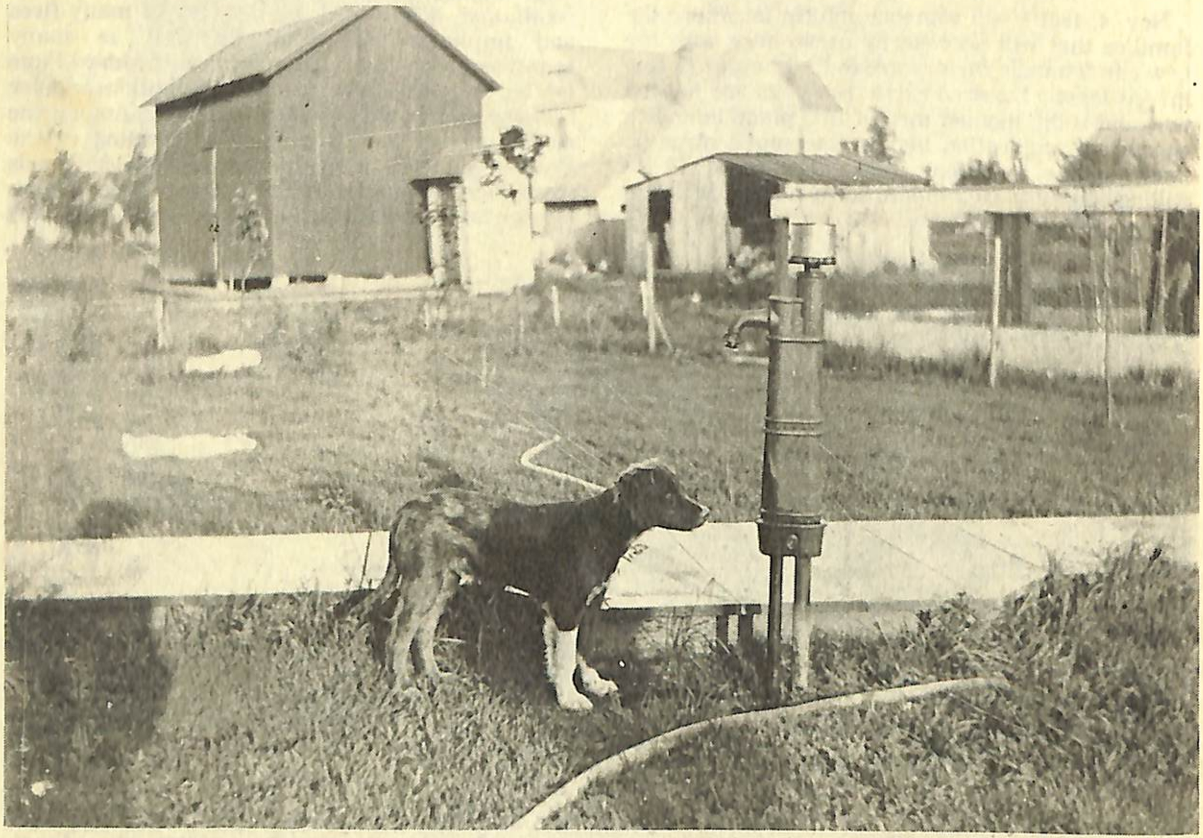
Townspeople were very uneasy and skeptical of the origin of the fires but it wasn't until years later that they learned about "Old Jack Page" and his gang. Jack was the chief arsonist that hired out to set fires. Hundreds of business establishments, barns and homes were destroyed by fire to collect the insurance or merely for revenge. It caused the creation of the post of State Fire Marshall and caused the fire insurance companies to begin withdrawing their protection. Hardest hit was Fayette where 42 buildings were destroyed at one time in May of 1880. Headquarters for the gang was a saloon in West Unity run by Homer Morrison. When Page finally decided to confess, as a means of retaliation, it unlocked the mystery of many fires and implicated Morrison as well as many prominent individuals. Morrison said he hired Page for his own use to wipe out competition and for revenge and would pay him $5 or $10. Among the confessions of Morrison was the burning of the Pratt-Wynn store in Montpelier. It was a dry goods store located on the south side of Main Street. George Letcher was also well known around town as



No. 48 — Empire Street looking north. Cars parked where post office is now. Circa 1920's. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Catherine Dunlap.



No. 49 — N. G. Lash in Montpelier's first automobile and his wife Samantha standing in front of their home on Main Street. The small building and part of their home was torn down to make way for the Kaufman Theater still located there. Circa 1900. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Elsie Bordner, niece of Mrs. Lash.



No. 50 — Unknown early Montpelier backyard. Notice barn with outhouse, chicken pen, wooden walk and the latest in a freeze-proof water hydrant. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy William Taylor.

the builder of the Letcher block that was built west of the Baldwin Block. His building took over 2 years to complete and the townspeople were very annoyed at the disgraceful condition of his building standing unfinished so long. July 14, 1882--"Unfinished Letcher block resembles ancient ruins and will soon be valueless if nothing is done."

It will probably never be known how many other Montpelier fires were set by arsonists, but the facts seem to indicate that Pratt & Wynn had guilty consciences as one died from worry and the other from suicide. Letcher, also was guilty of wrongdoing and received a 5 year prison sentence. The investigation, which lasted for years, disgraced the dead, sent at least 18 to the penitentiary and caused suicides and death to many from worry over what Jack might do next. It is believed that Jack never "told it all" and continued to blackmail some of his former cohorts.

The danger of fire to frame buildings was reason enough for prospective business men to build with brick when considering the many blocks that started sprouting up after the Baldwins building was completed.

The saloons or bowerys as they were called kept pace and it is said "smoke from the smoldering ruins had not ceased before a tent saloon hovered over a portion of the burnt district to deepen the unsightly appearance of Main."

The temperence union held regular meetings and was always at work condemning the saloons but to no avail. Eventually a large tax was imposed on the saloons which caused some to close down but the end finally came, for a short period at least, when the Scott law was inacted. "On July 20, 1883, Montpelier had the honor of being the first village in the great state of Ohio to adopt prohibition under the Scott law. Her citizens, to be wise, will see to it that the ordinance be never repealed."

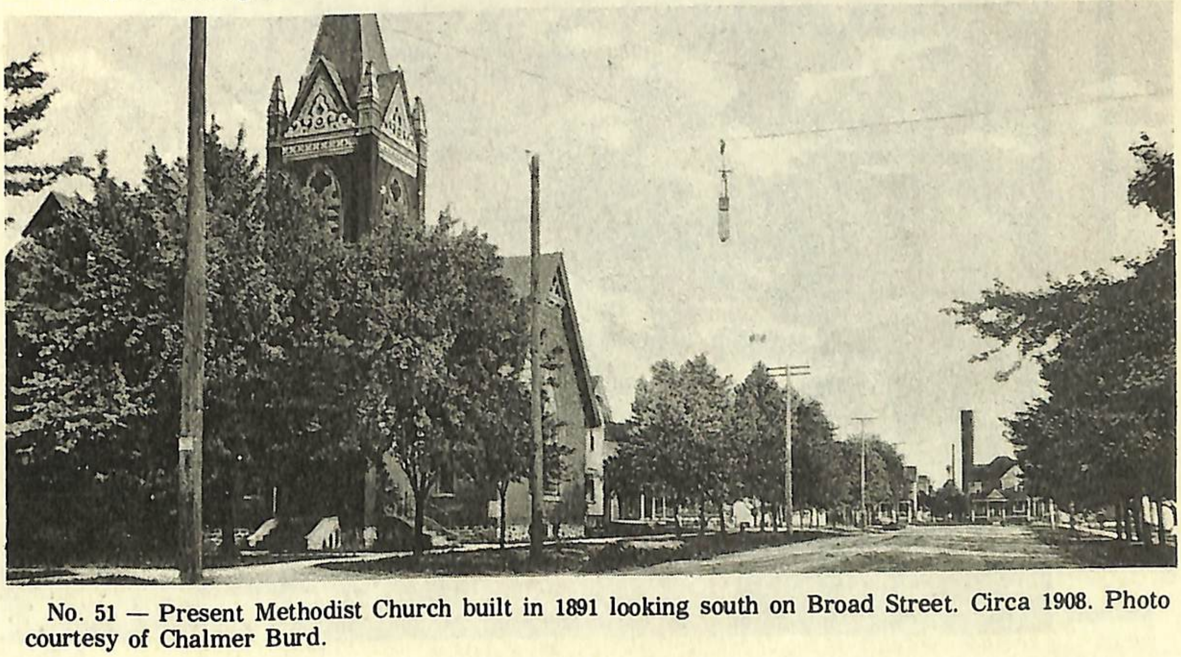
Aug. 3, 1883 - Our town is now quiet and orderly and we hope all rioting will forever be a thing of the past and will be so long as the saloons are kept closed.

An early frame building that survived the fires is now an apartment on the east side of the Montpelier Theater and prior to that was the office of Dr. T. L. Taylor.

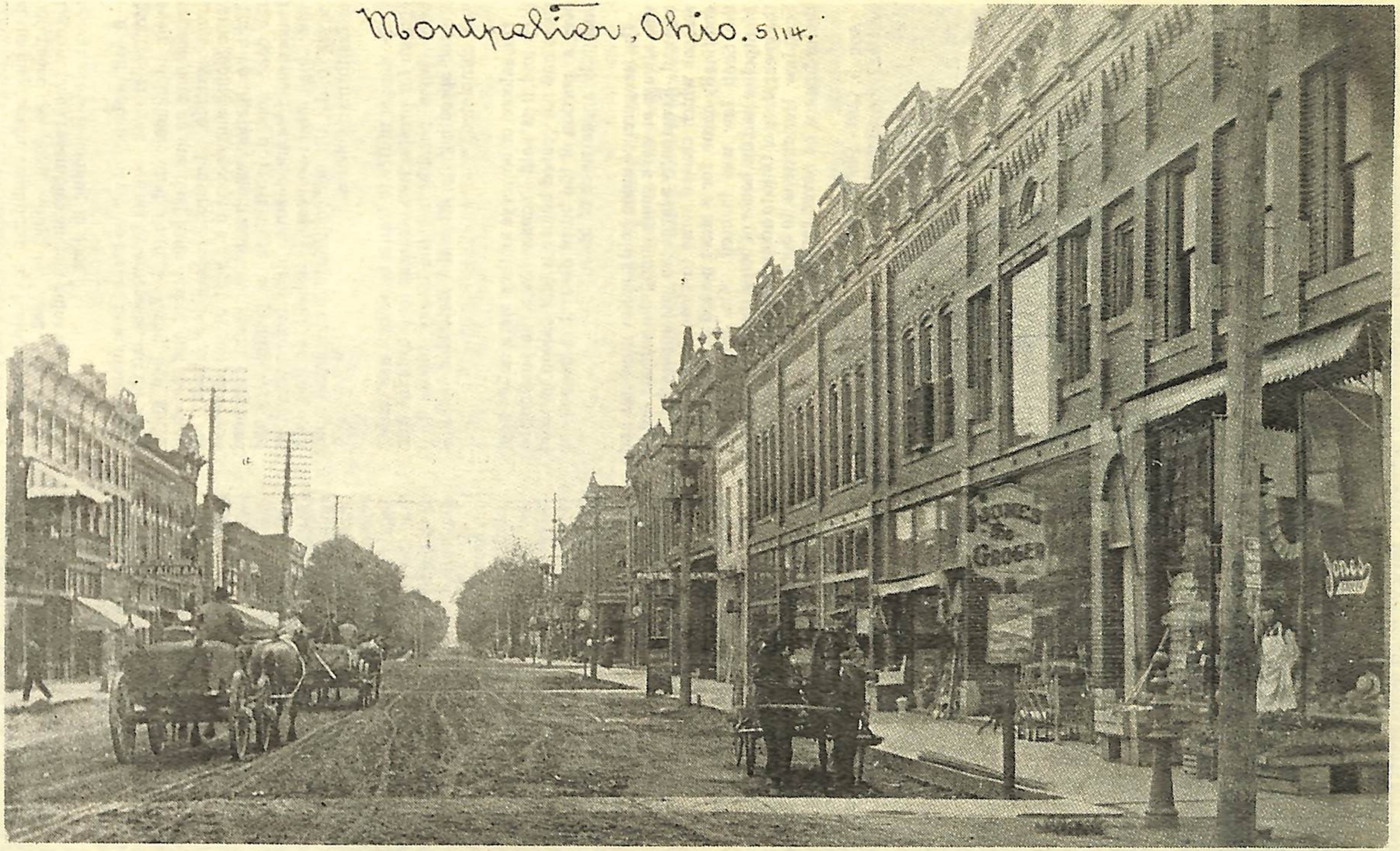
It was the home of Nathan & Samantha Lash and was originally larger with a small frame building next to it (see photo No. 49). Mr. Lash was a furniture dealer and the town undertaker. His newspaper ad read "A good assortment of furniture--Undertaking a specialty--I keep a large assortment of wood and cloth caskets. Located in wood building opposite Gratz grist mill." Samantha was a teacher, but is remembered best for her artistic talent. She studied in Toledo, Detroit and Chicago as a young woman and continued to paint as a hobby throughout her lifetime. She did beautiful china painting, had a kiln and did her own firings. She also painted oils and water colors with flags one of her favorite subjects. Small paintings that she presented to graduating classes and her hand painted china are now prized possessions of numerous Montpelierites.

A brother-in-law of Mr. Nash tore down the small building and part of their house in the mid 1920's to make way for the Kaufman Theater. Montpelier had another theater called the Paramount that operated from 1936 until the early 1950's. It was located in the building now occupied by Gorny-Winzelers (205 W. Main). Keith Porter told this writer that Montpelier had earlier theaters (Colonial, Empire) and one he remembers particularly was known as the Pastime Theater and located at 312 W. Main (The Bar). Admission was 5 cents and the silent movies so jerky that you nearly ruined your eyesight watching them.

The age of television nearly drove the movie industry out of business. Movies drastically changed as producers challenged censors and no longer left anything to the imagination in their move to draw customers back to the theaters. Disney type movies no longer draw crowds and movies are now rated. Montpelier's theater closed



No. 51 — Present Methodist Church built in 1891 looking south on Broad Street. Circa 1908. Photo courtesy of Chalmer Burd.


Montpelier, Ohio. 5114.
Jones The Grocer
Jones

No. 52 — Main Street looking east. Jones Grocery now Gambles. Small white building on right, now Riley's Bar, was the Pastime Theater. Unpaved streets. Circa 1909. Photo courtesy the Paul Underwoods.

due to lack of business but now does a thriving business showing X-rated movies of which you must be 18 years or older to attend. Regretfully, it has been this writer's experience that when Montpelier is mentioned to outsiders, it is well known as the town that shows the naughty movies.

★ ★ ★

Before the days of the automatic refrigerator, the ice box was used to keep food cold during warm weather. Each ice box had a compartment to hold a large chunk of ice with a drip pan below to catch the water as the ice melted. The St. Joe River again served a useful purpose to the citizens as in December 1880--"ice was being cut in the St. Joe and was from 10-12 inches thick and clear as crystal."

December 24, 1880–Mr. Jacob Snyder sold Mr. Slaybacher, proprietor of the bottling works in Bryan, about 2 acres of land adjoining the river. He will put up an ice house and fill it this winter.

Mark Bordner told this writer that he used to haul ice on a bobsled from dawn to dusk for $1.00 a load. He would get the ice, already cut into foot squares, at a pond near Boones Lumber Company and haul it to an ice house in back of the present Dean Building. He could make 6 trips a day.

Mrs. Ina Hillard, this writer's grandmother, told that kids loved to follow the ice wagon delivering ice in the summer and grab pieces of ice to chew on.

Numerous townspeople had their own ice houses much the same as today we have a workshop or toolshed. Sawdust was put on the ice to keep it from melting in the summer. In the early 1950's, Montpelier still had an ice house. This writer remembers it as a tiny building that stood back of the hatchery on the north side of the alley in the 100 block of Broad on the west side. In the mid 50's, the hatchery and ice house were torn down by Meindl Motor Sales and it is now used by them for new car display.

As Montpelier began to prosper in the early 1880's a bank was much in demand, but took a few years to establish its trustworthiness.

March 3, 1882 - The Citizens bank of this place opened up auspiciously last Saturday and transacted a goodly amount of business for the 1st day.

May 26, 1882 - Citizens bank established by J. M. Washington passed into management of Moores & Co. with J. L. Dawson cashier. Mr. Washington and family moved back to Indianapolis from where they came a short time ago.

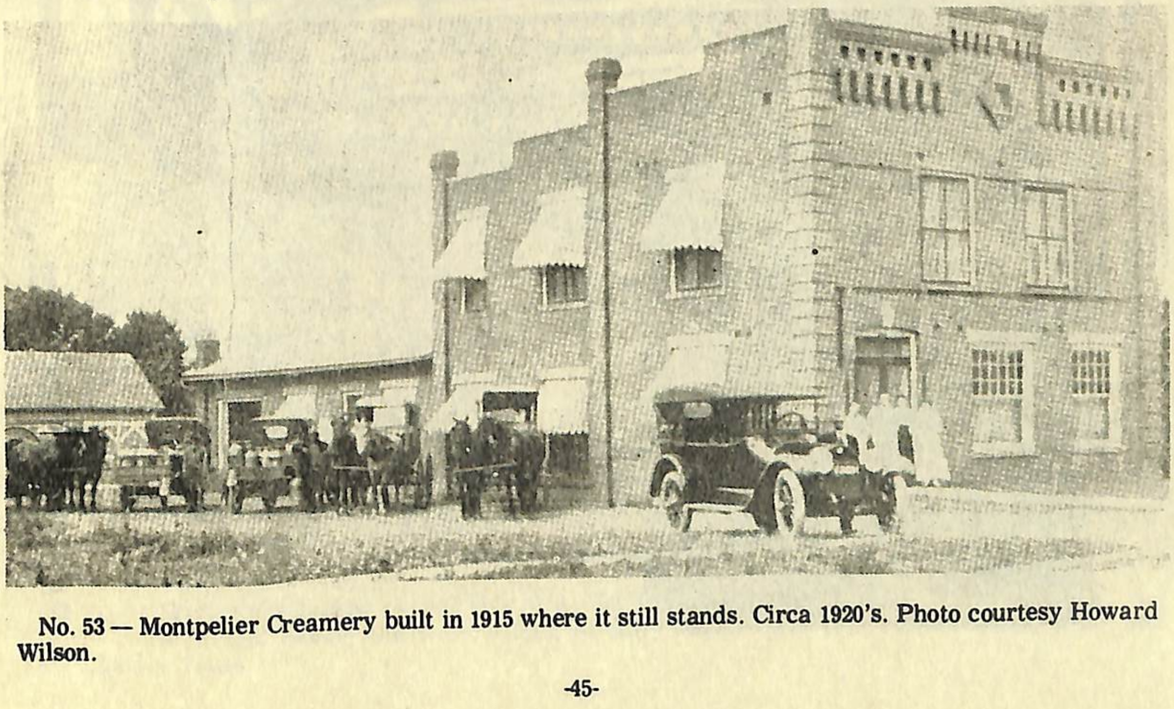
Aug. 4, 1882 - Bank will soon be established upon a solid basis, one in which deposits can be made with safety. Bank only open a portion of the time--doing a mere exchange business.

The National Bank Building was erected on the southwest corner of Main and Empire in 1887 and remains in business today. A branch bank, complete with drive-in window, was built east of town at 1201 E. Main in 1971.

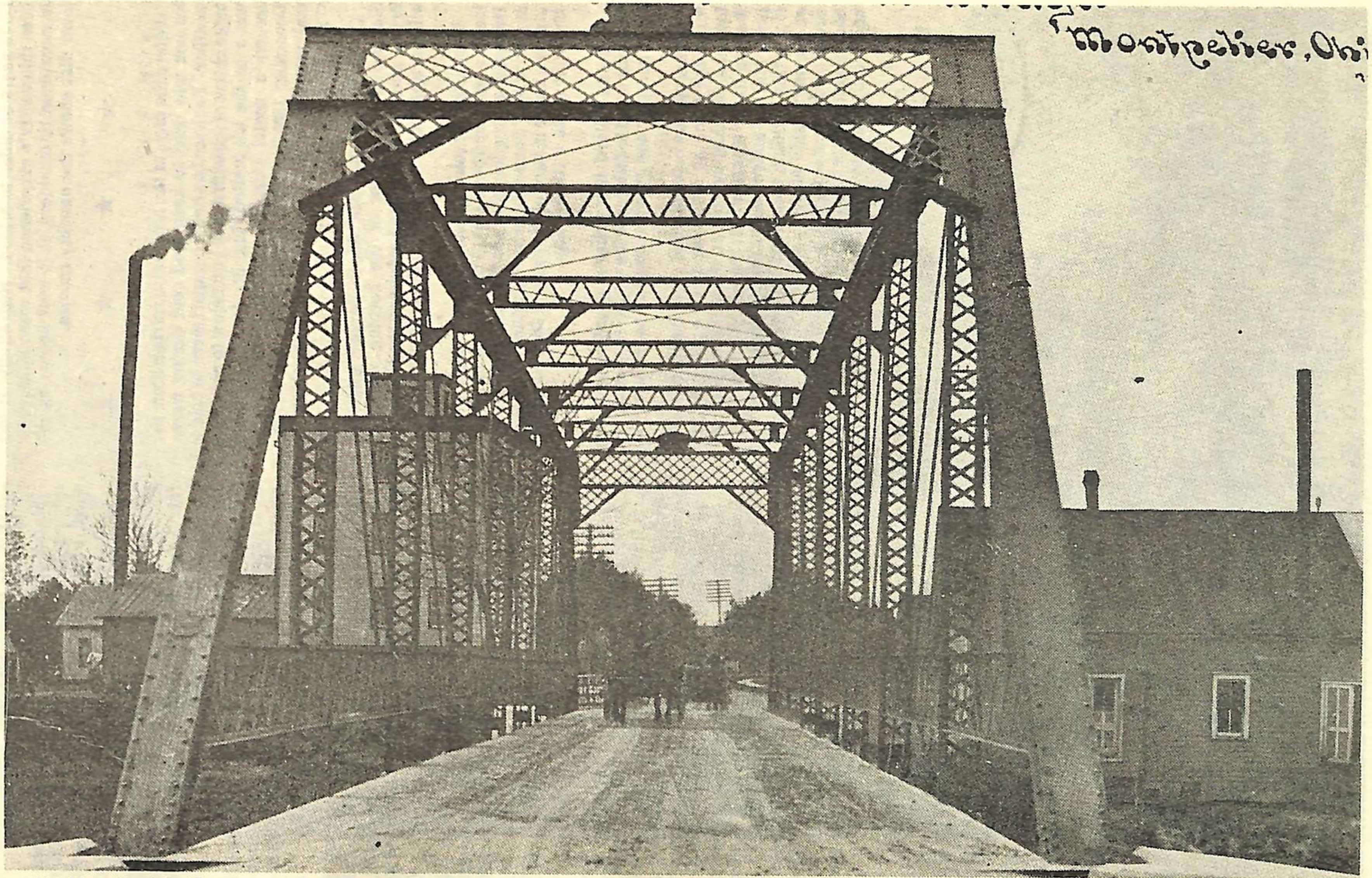
The Farmers & Merchants State and Savings Bank was built in 1916 on the north side of Main Street at Main and Empire (225 W. Main) where it is still open for business.

★ ★ ★

In the 1880's, a stock company was formed which established the Montpelier Creamery. It stood at the northwest corner of Water and Monroe and was a frame building. John Miller, an expert butter maker, managed the business until 1898 when he was forced to discontinue because of bad health. One of the stockholders was D. F. Brown and he was known as "Strawberry Brown" because in the 1890's, he furnished the entire town with strawberries. He owned a farm on the south side of Montpelier and the present Brown Road that runs east and west on the south side of the park was named after him.



No. 53 — Montpelier Creamery built in 1915 where it still stands. Circa 1920's. Photo courtesy Howard Wilson.


Montpelier, Ohi

No. 54 — North bridge. Montpelier City Mills on left - Original creamery building built in 1880 on right. Circa 1911. Photo courtesy Chalmer Burd.

In later years, the building was moved north to the river. (See photo No. 54) It was torn down in 1915 and a new modern brick building erected by G. Grant Stahl. (See photo no. 53) Mr. Stahl came to Montpelier in 1905 and originated the "Rose Brand" label for butter. Ownership changed hands many times in the following years and was greatly enlarged with more modern equipment in 1937 when Jesse E. Cox was the sole owner. It was discontinued in the mid 1960's and is now owned by Barnard Electric where they have their business.

Ethel Bowen, an employee of the creamery for 30 years, told this writer that in the 1930's, the creamery had regular routes for their wagons to go pick up cream from the farmers. The cream was made into butter and for a short time they made cheese also. Later, the creamery bought whole milk from the farmers, separated it and churned the cream into butter. The skim milk and buttermilk was dried and sold as such. Many farmers bought it in large quantities and used it to make mash to feed their animals. In the latter years, when the creamery was part of a larger organization in Defiance, farmers sold eggs to the creamery and the eggs and butter were shipped to Detroit to be sold.

In the early 1920's, Al Krider added a cement block building to the west of his small engine shop located on the SW corner of Main and Monroe (now location of Montpelier Locker). It was established as the City Dairy for his son-in-law, Bill Davis.

In 1927, Perry Faulkner and Bill Brown from Michigan purchased the dairy. A short time later the Faulkners became sole owners. Milk was pasteurized and bottled for home delivery. Milkmen were early risers as they had to get the milk delivered in time for the busy housewife to use in her cooking and baking. This writer can remember waiting for her Dad, Charles Youse, to bring "Beauty" to the barn after a days work. Beauty, the horse, was kept in a barn located on the alley back of the home at 207 N. Platt Street. In the mornings after the milk wagon was loaded and the route started, there was no need for the milkman to gee and haw all day as the horse knew exactly where to go and when to stop. As the age of homogenized milk came into being and supermarkets sprang up, women began buying milk at the grocery and thus brought to the end another era in Montpelier. Future generations will never be able to recall going out on a cold morning to get the milk (frozen) and seeing the cardboard cap sitting a few inches above the glass bottle; nor will they remember pouring the cream off the top to get to the milk. (See photo No. 55)

Mr. Faulkner, although born in Indiana, made Montpelier his hometown after purchasing the dairy. He was well known in the area as a public speaker and it is told that he could hold an audience spellbound, the likes of which have never been seen since. Although he never went far in school, he was an educated man as he read constantly and had nearly total recall. Under the Truman administration, he held a prominent position in Washington, D.C. as the Chief of the Veterans Employment Service. During this period, Mrs. Faulkner managed the dairy. It was discontinued in the early 1950's.

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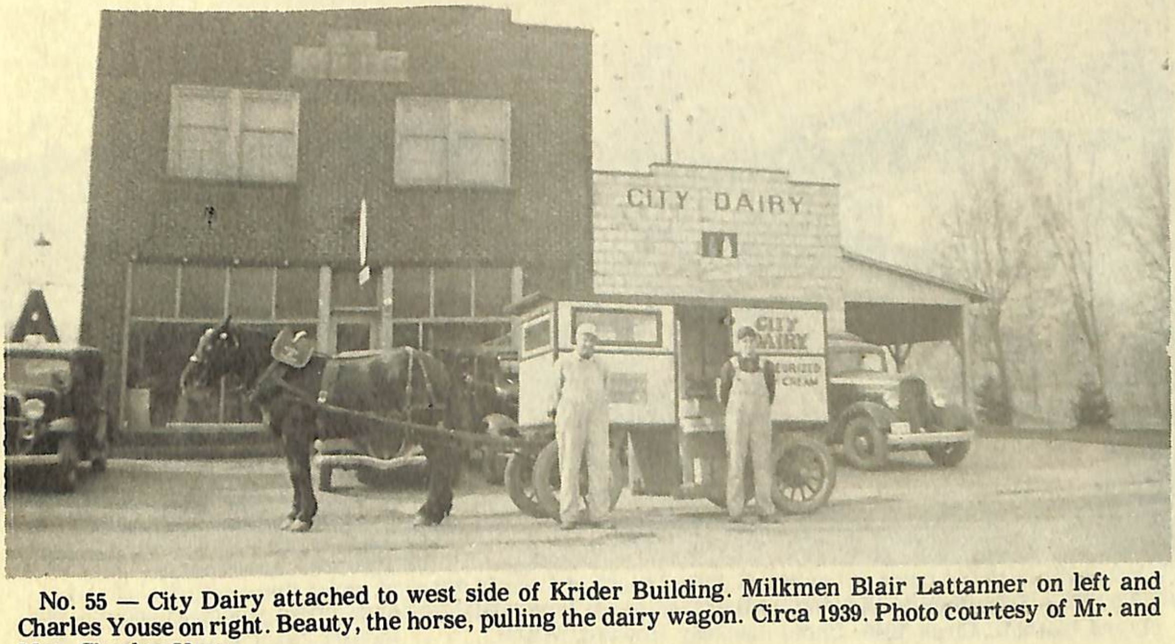
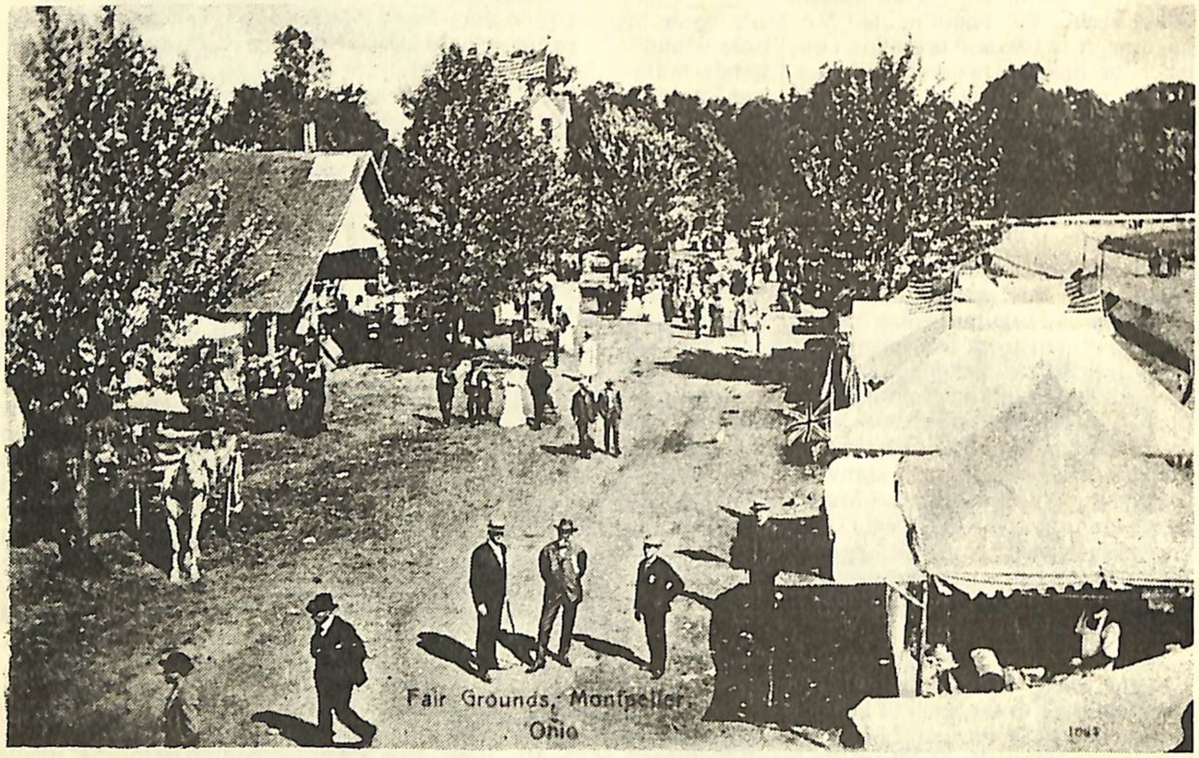
Hitching posts were placed around the public square in 1880. October 18, 1895 - "Some of the farmers are complaining and justly so, because the deep holes in front of hitching posts in town are not filled up with dirt or gravel so as to prevent the formation of mud holes. Ladies dresses have been ruined by the splashing of mud by teams hitched at these unsightly places."

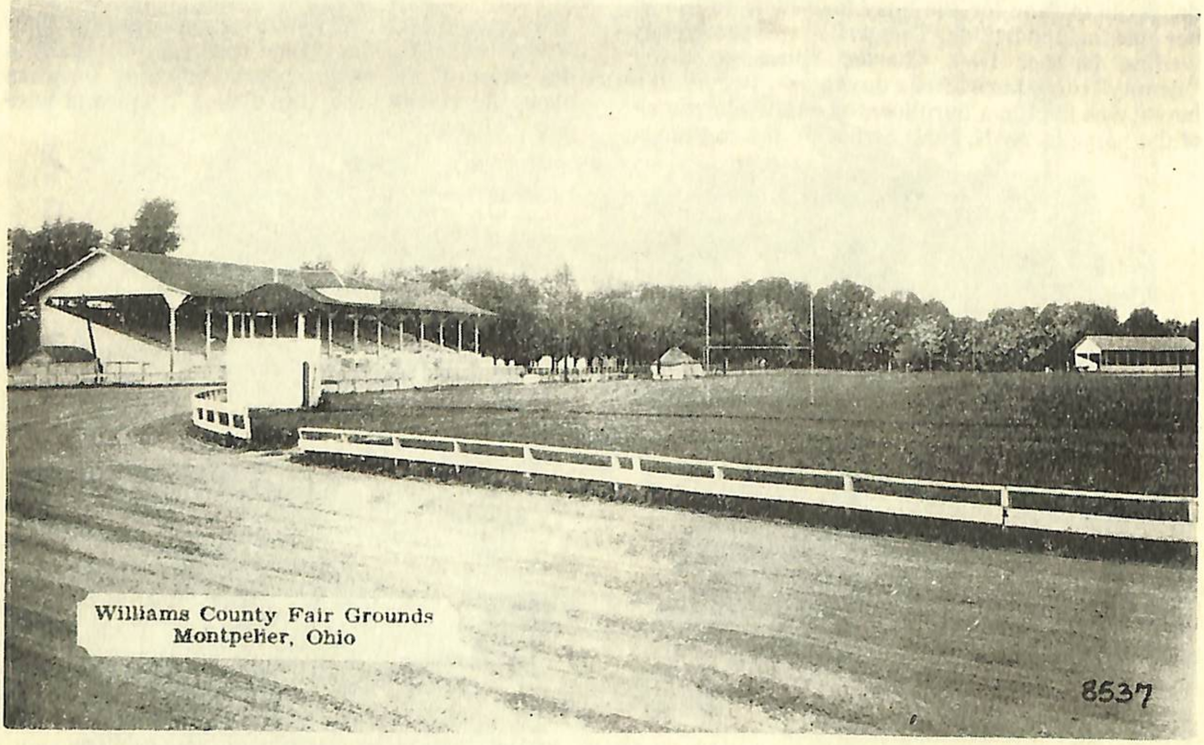
Telegraph wires were first strung in July of 1881. May 5, 1882 - "The Short Line Telegraph Company is the name of the new corporation doing business about the village. They have about 2 miles of wire and 5 offices."



No. 55 — City Dairy attached to west side of Krider Building. Milkmen Blair Lattanner on left and Charles Youse on right. Beauty, the horse, pulling the dairy wagon. Circa 1939. Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Youse.


Fair Grounds, Montpelier, Ohio
1049

No. 56 — Williams County Fair taken from grandstand looking north. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy the Carl Bohners.


Williams County Fair Grounds
Montpelier, Ohio
8537

No. 57 — Fairgrounds showing both grandstands. Notice goal posts on infield where "Locomotives" played football. Circa 1940. Photo courtesy Howard Wilson.

FAIR GROUNDS

In 1886, a group of farmers and businessmen of the area organized the Union Agricultural Society. They purchased land owned by heirs of the co-founder of Montpelier, John K. Bryner. The floral hall finished in cottage style and still in use, was one of the first buildings erected. They also built a vegetable hall, 40 box stalls, 100 open horse and cattle stalls, a sheep shed, a grandstand to hold 1,000 people and a judges stand. A racetrack was soon completed also, and the first complete fair held in the fall of 1886. (See photo no. 56 and 58)

In the early 1890's, meetings were held twice a year. One in the spring for horse racing and one in the fall for races and exhibits of all types.

In 1899, the fair was reorganized and the name changed to the Williams County Agricultural Society. It was then set up to be run under rules and regulations of the State of Ohio for county fairs.

The original grandstand was moved to the infield of the racetrack on the northwest corner in 1936 when a new grandstand to hold 1,500 was constructed by the WPA (Works Progress Administration. (See photo no. 57). The WPA was a government agency created to provide jobs. It is told that the employees were never in a hurry and thus, jokingly, the initials were said to mean "we putter around." The old grandstand continued to be used by spectators to watch baseball games played on the diamond in front of it. It was torn down in the 1950's as it was no longer needed and in a bad state of repairs. With the completion of the new football stadium and ball diamonds at the new park south of Montpelier, the school sports were moved to the new location. The infield of the racetrack had been the "Locomotives" football field and track meets were also held there. The grandstand stood on the west side, outside the track in the middle at the same location as the original one.

In 1974, the grandstand was burned to the ground by arsonists. But many fond memories remain of watching sports, horse and auto racing, school bands, etc. from the grandstand during the fair and year round.

Without the grandstands seating capacity, the fairboard has had a hard time attracting name talent for fair week. It has also been a handicap for the large crowds that came to the tractor and horse pulling contests during the fair and horse shows, etc. during the rest of the year.

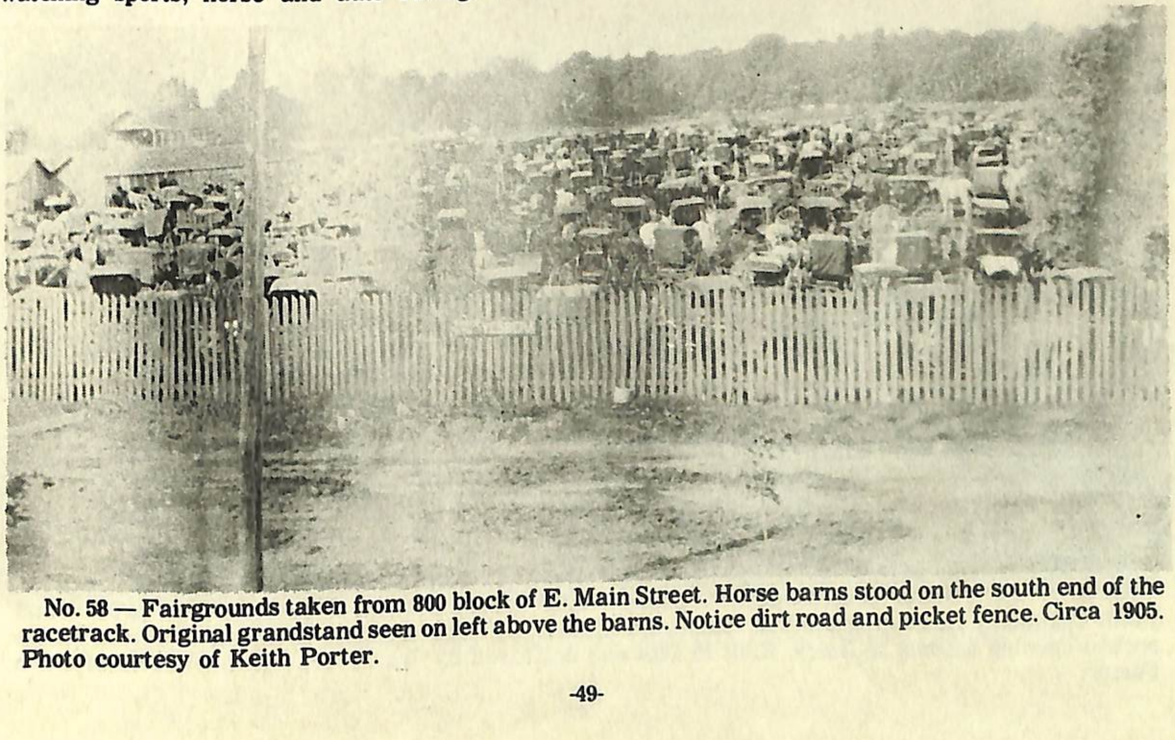
Twice a bond issue was defeated by Williams County voters for construction of a new grandstand. As with the schools, only time will tell the outcome of the fair.

★ ★ ★

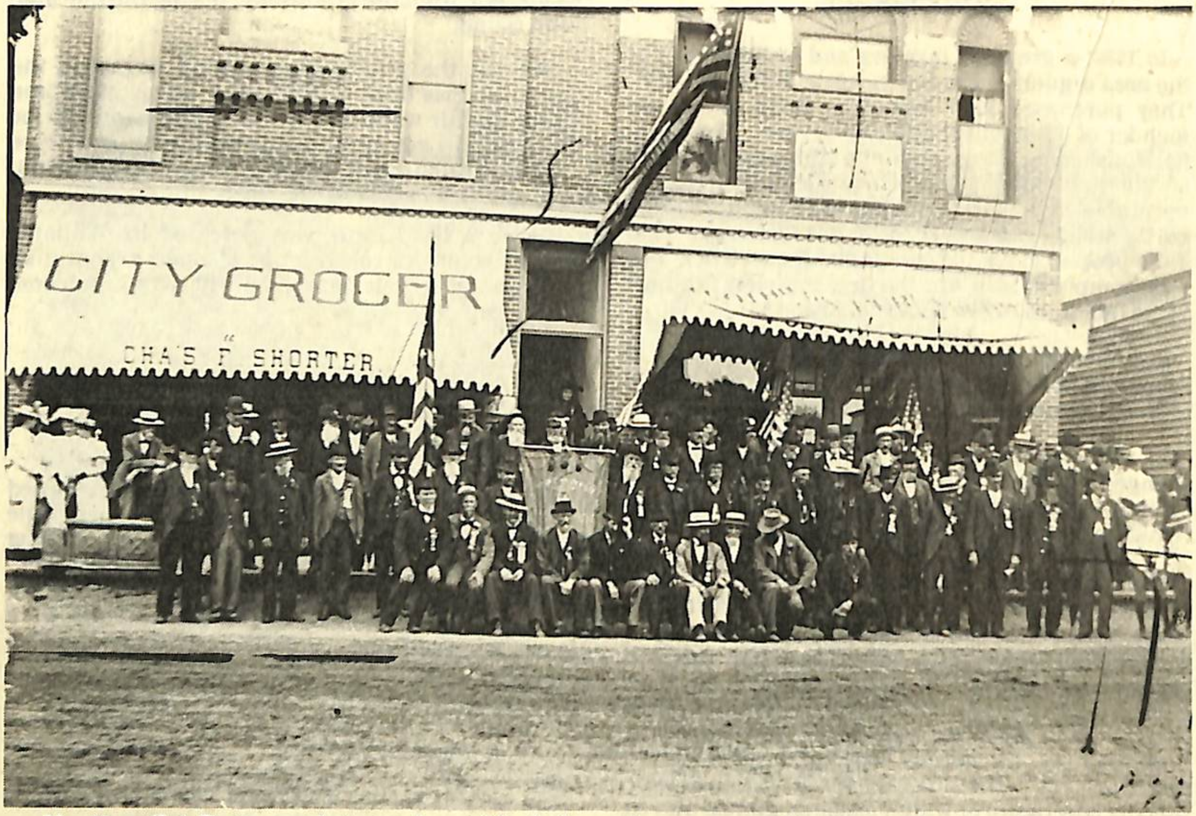
Moses Louden was an early settler that owned considerable land in and around Montpelier. The Louden Cemetery, in back of Evergreen Nursing Home on South East Avenue, is named after him. Many early burials were in the family plot and will never be found as many times the markers were made of wood and long since decayed. Louden Cemetery was the first Montpelier cemetery. Dec. 31, 1880 - "town looking for suitable place for a cemetery. The old grounds are being abandoned in view of the unfavorableness of the soil." Many graves were moved, presumedly to Riverside Cemetery. The center of Riverside is called Circle Park and has some of the oldest markers.

Hiram Louden Post 155 G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) was organized in 1881. Eligibility was to every honorably discharged Union soldier of the Civil War. Initiation fee was $2.00 and dues 50 cents per quarter.

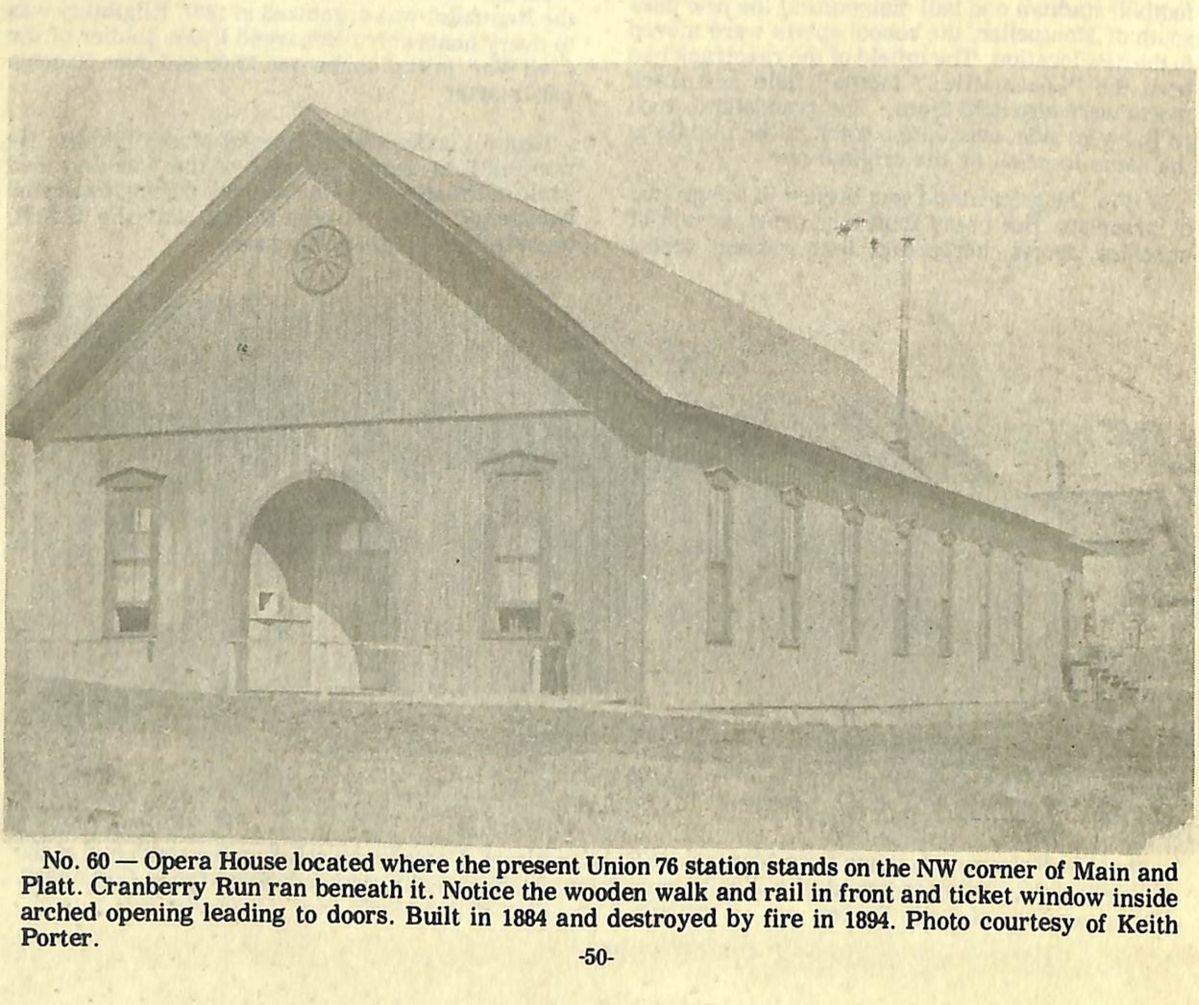
Hiram Louden was the son of Moses Louden. He was the first county enlistee of the war and died while in the service of his country during his second enlistment. Thus, it was fitting that the G.A.R. organization be given his name.



No. 58 — Fairgrounds taken from 800 block of E. Main Street. Horse barns stood on the south end of the racetrack. Original grandstand seen on left above the barns. Notice dirt road and picket fence. Circa 1905. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.



No. 59 — G.A.R. group photograph outside their newly constructed building. Flag hanging from their hall window (303 W. Main). At this time there were no other brick buildings attached. Circa 1895. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.



No. 60 — Opera House located where the present Union 76 station stands on the NW corner of Main and Platt. Cranberry Run ran beneath it. Notice the wooden walk and rail in front and ticket window inside arched opening leading to doors. Built in 1884 and destroyed by fire in 1894. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.

The W.R.C. (Women's Relief Corps) was organized in 1888 to aid the veterans. It was an auxiliary of the G.A.R. and worked hand in hand with them. One cold windy night it was decided to build a hall as the places they were meeting were too cold and it would cost too much to buy a stove.

In 1894, the G.A.R. erected the building at 303 W. Main. Their Memorial Hall was and still is on the upper floor with Easler's Men's Apparel below. It is presumed by this writer that W. S. Boone was the contractor and built the west side of the building at the same time, thus matching it to look like one complete block. January 31, 1895--"Charles F. Shorter has purchased the lower story of W. S. Boone's new brick block which joins the G.A.R. Memorial Hall." Mr. Shorter moved his grocery from across the street to his new location in June and the upper floor was occupied by the I.O.O.F. (International Order of Oddfellows). The first floor of the G.A.R. building has always been occupied by a clothing store. (See photo No. 59) Mr. Shorter built his home at 532 Empire Street. At that time, people asked why he built so far out in the country.

In 1920, the G.A.R. and W.R.C. erected a monument commemorating the war dead. It stands in the center of Circle Park at Riverside Cemetery. The cannon standing to the north of the monument once stood in front of the G.A.R. building on wheels. Chester and Clela Bible told this writer that the cannon was moved to the fairgrounds for the 4th of July each year and shot off at 5:00 a.m. with a bang that was heard all over town.

During its prime years, the G.A.R. "camp fires" and social gatherings were a source of pleasure to young and old. From an enrollment in excess of 200 members, the ranks of the "boys of 61" were reduced to 14 when it was voted to surrender its charter on July 5, 1930.

The W.R.C. decided to keep on working and accept any woman that was of good moral character and had never given aid to the enemy of the Union. Since then, it has worked closely with the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, W.W. II Mothers, etc.

The patriotic organizations have always held memorial services on Memorial Day and served beans on Saturday of the fair with veterans allowed free admission that day.

* * *

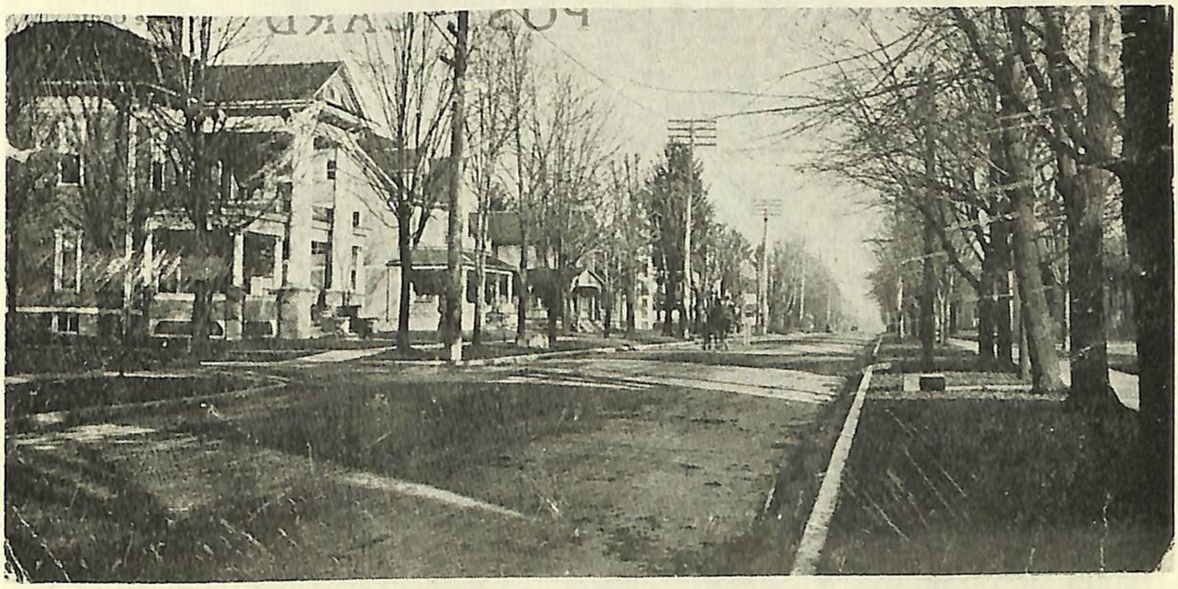
The Ladies Historical Society is the oldest women's organization in Montpelier. On January 8, 1883, a few ladies of Montpelier met in the home of Mrs. B.S. Carpenter to organize a society for mental improvement. They officially organized in 1885 and are still an active club.

* * *

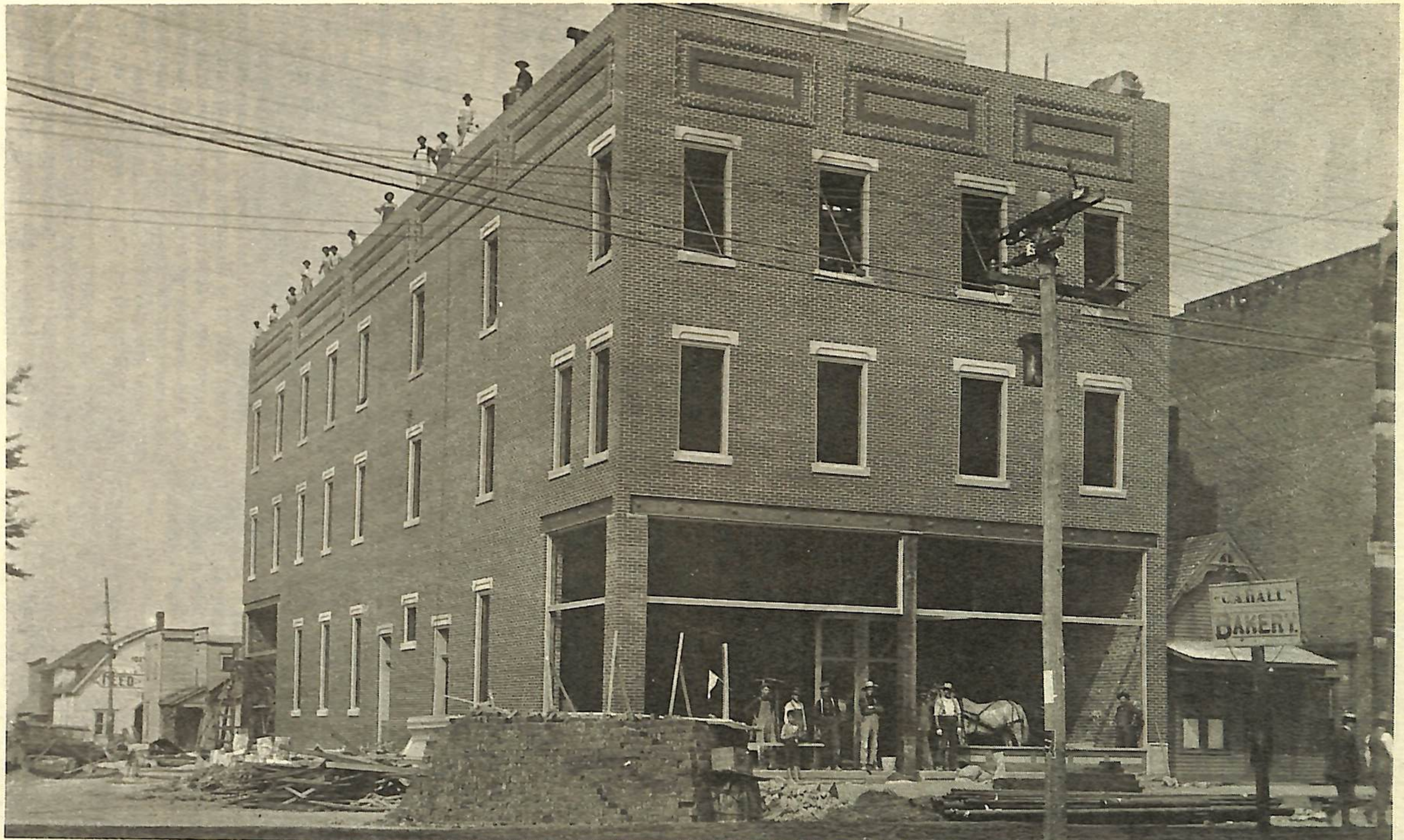
North and east of the Louden Cemetery is a small hill that was once surrounded by swamp. It was used during the Civil War as an "Underground Railroad" and made a perfect place to hide slaves on their journey to freedom. Montpelier had a negro family that lived here for years. Elmer Lowery was a barber in town. The family had originally been slaves and when their owners came north, they brought them along but as free men.

* * *

Another son of Moses Louden was Harrison who platted two additions to Montpelier and had a street named after him. Harrison built a hall in 1881 that was "neat and nice for the convenience of the village and his charges are very moderate." It is believed this hall was the small two story building located on the northwest corner of Empire and Washington (see photo No. 35). Dancing and skating were enjoyed in the upstairs and the main floor was rented out.



No. 61 — Main Street looking east from Pleasant Street. Circa 1912. Photo courtesy Chalmer Burd.



No. 62 — Lantz Building being constructed on the NW corner of Washington and Empire Streets by Len Lantz. Small building on right was at one time a doctor's office and also a tailor shop. Brick building on right was Louden's. Frame building to the back was the residence of Miss Libby Arter. It is told that her gentleman friend went off to sea and never returned but she kept a light burning in the window for him until her death. The house was located where Powers Machine Shop offices are now. The white building was a livery stable. It faced Jonesville Street and is now a vacant lot used for Powers parking. Circa 1908. Photo courtesy of the Carl Bohners.

In 1882, the Hagerty Hall or Hagerty's Opera House was completed. Dec. 22, 1882 - "Hagerty's Hall is now finished, the white coating and circle work around the chandeliers making it attractive indeed." (Location unknown). Blair Hagerty was the town physician having opened his practice here in 1873. He was a civil war veteran and became well known while serving on the state legislature. His favorite expression was "get up the dog house and howl," thus the nickname "Dog House Hagerty." He built the unusual brick house with the three story tower in 1885. It is located on the southeast corner of Jonesville and Washington Streets and was once owned and occupied by the American Legion but is now an apartment house.

Harrison Louden built Montpelier's most famous opera house in 1884 at the northwest corner of Main and Platt Streets now the location of Jerry's Union 76 Station. It was the only building that could be lighted up with gas and was regarded as "one of the best auxiliaries to the growth of the town." (See photo no. 60).

The building stood on pilings with Cranberry Run flowing beneath it. Florence Echler told this writer that her mother spoke many times of the grand times she had dancing in the opera house with Cranberry Run flooded up to floor level on the outside. Access to the building was on high wooden sidewalks across the front. Due to his health, in 1890, Mr. Louden traded the opera house to James A. Neil for a farm out west. The building was destroyed by fire in 1894.

Harrison's sons, Willard and Charles, founded the Louden Department Store. Their first store was on Main Street prior to building a brick block on Empire Street. Several sources have told this writer that the second floor of the brick block was used as a hall for stage plays and community functions. The stage was at the west end and it was known as the opera house. Florence Echler said her father told of setting up chairs for stage productions there. The chair legs would get progressively longer the farther back they went, thus the patrons in the back rows were up in the air a few feet but could see well. This building burned approximately 1925 and when rebuilt was attached to the Lantz building that already stood on the northwest corner of Empire and Washington Street (see photo no. 62). This writer has seen a photograph taken about 1912 that shows a sign "Empire Theater" in this location and it is not known whether it was located in the Lantz building or was another name for the opera house. Eventually the Louden store occupied the Lantz Block also and was in business continuously until their closing last year. This writer remembers the 2nd floor of the corner building as a bowling alley until it burned in the early 1950's. The 3rd floor was a roller skating rink and both were reached from very wide wooden steps with the entrance on Washington Street.

* * *

Mud was everyone's worst enemy back in the early days and getting stuck was a common occurrence until roads were finally improved. (See photo no. 33 and 44).

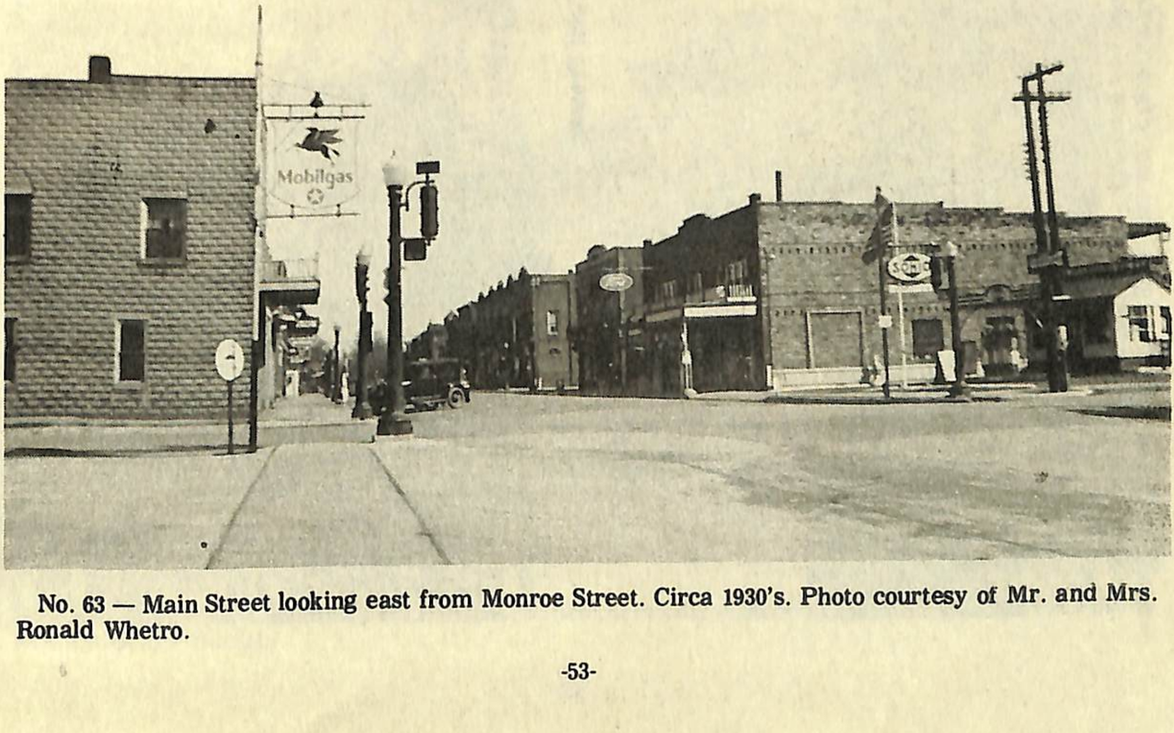
In November, 1880, Charley Brown started a "Business Chaise" he called Express No. 1. He transported all types of merchandise, household goods, etc. between Bryan and Montpelier. Following are a few illustrations taken from the March, 1881 newspaper.

"Bad roads are no 'object' to Charley Brown who makes his daily trip from here to Bryan and returns with a four mule team drawing heavy loads both ways regardless of mud. It would take something of a load to 'set' his team."

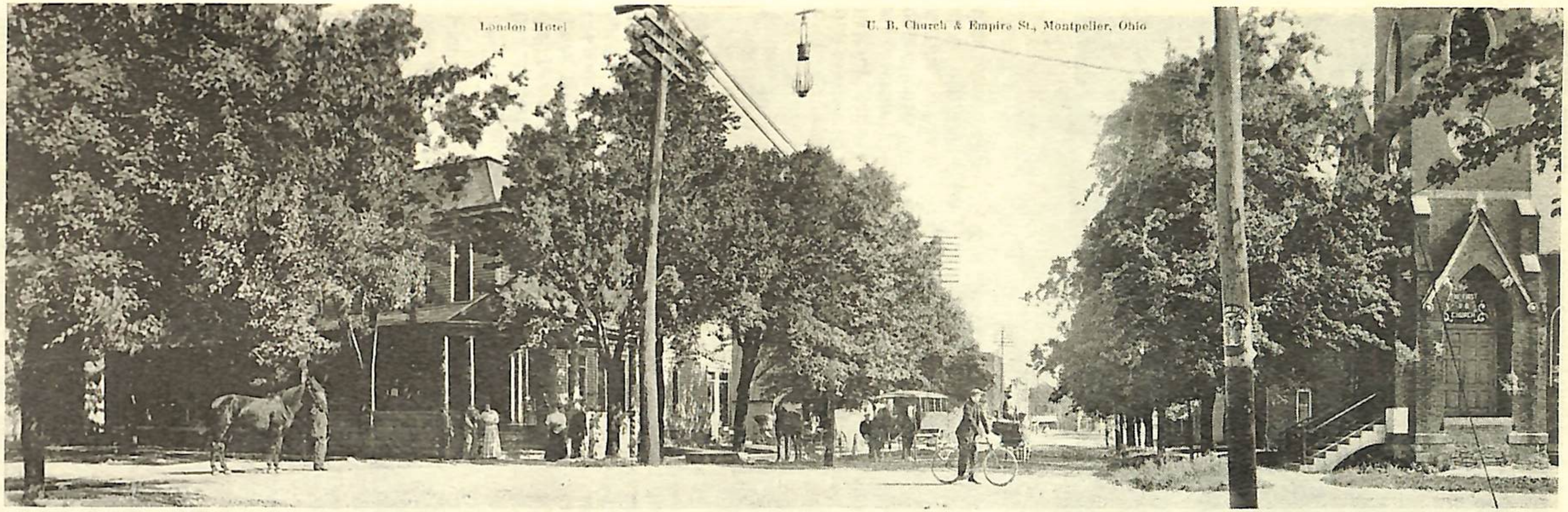
"Wamsley" the eccentric notion dealer is mudstuck and is now taking up his abode at the Globe Hotel."

"Lawyer Johnston is 'mud-bound' at Bryan."

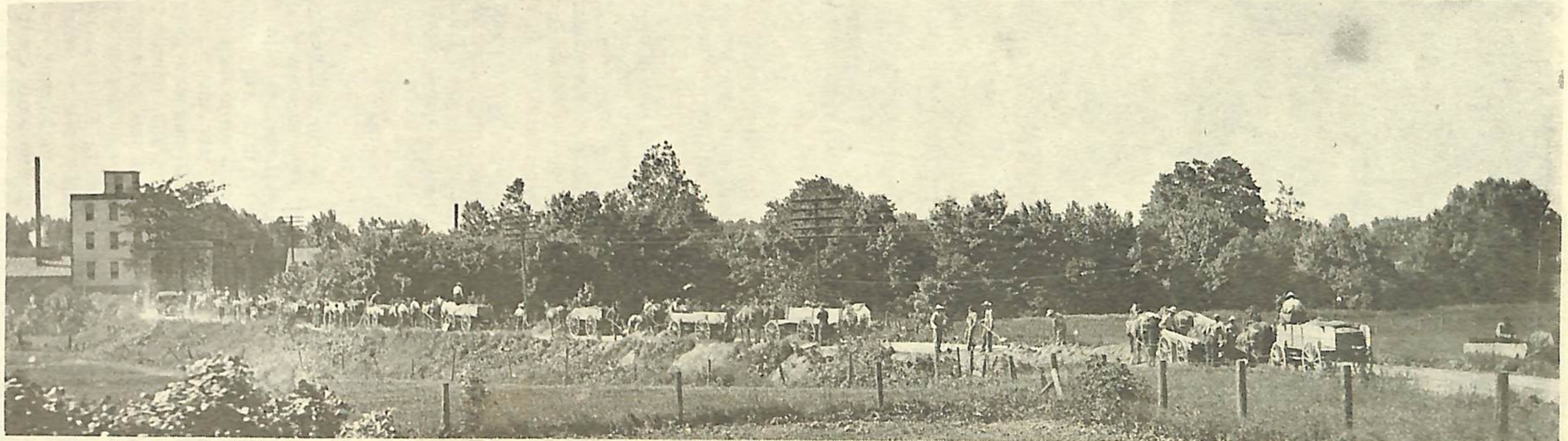
"On account of the terrible condition of the roads, the grist mills have had but little to do the past week."



No. 63 — Main Street looking east from Monroe Street. Circa 1930's. Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Whetro.



No. 64 — Louden Hotel on left - First UB Church on right. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Prosser.



No. 65 — June 9, 1914 - town closed down and everyone came to help widen and grade the road north of town. Montpelier City Mills on left. Notice the road went farther west. The dirt came from the Bordner pit back of their home and all the work was done by hand. The women of the town prepared the meal on the lawn of the A. J. Bordner farm. Photo courtesy of the Mark Bordners.

When the mud dried, it would leave huge ruts which were just as miserable and would make walking and driving a wagon extremely difficult. This problem was remedied by the scraper pulled over the streets.

October 8, 1880 - "The scraper has been leveling our streets and they present a smoother and better appearance."

Another problem in the dry weather was the dust. On Sept. 23, 1880, Montpelier was the center of a huge Republican rally and ox roast held on the island (see map). The crowd was estimated at 10,000 and continued all night. It was said the dust from the wagons was so thick you could cut it with a knife.

The solution to the dust was the street sprinkler which must have been used in years prior to 1891 as the newspaper article attests.

"The street sprinkler was started Monday morning and will be manipulated by William Miller this season. He and the dust will have a fight daily for supremacy, barring the times when a capious supply of water decends from the clouds. It is a small tax that the business men can well afford to pay for."

* * *

Wooden sidewalks, bridges and the roads leading from town needed attention also.

July, 1881 - "Some of the streets about the village present a very dilapidated appearance owing to the rotten and broken condition of the sidewalks and the vast amount of large weeds that are allowed to grow and flourish by the side of the road. This should not be permitted."

The bridge that spanned the St. Joe in the north part of town was replaced with a suspension bridge. The high water in the spring caused considerable damage and made it unsafe. It was believed the new one would last "a great length of time as any support brace or stick of timber can be duplicated at any time without any difficulty and travel would not be very much hindered."

"We hope the commissioners will see fit to widen the grade which runs across the St. Joe flats west of the village. Most of the way it is not wide enough for teams to pass which makes it extremely dangerous upon a dark night or when the grade is covered with snow and ice."

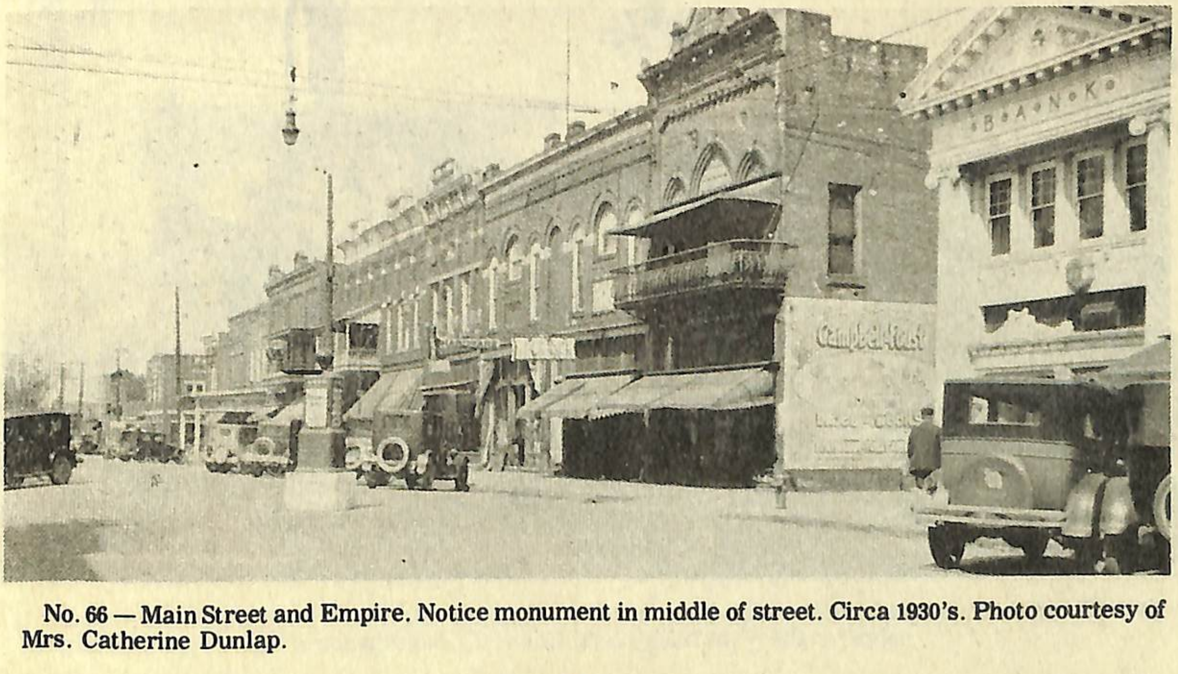
Originally the roads leading north and west of town were just wide enough for one team and when teams had to pass, the one leaving town had the right-of-way and the other had to pull over on a turnout provided. It wasn't until 1914 that the north grade was widened (see photo no. 65).

Mark Bordner told this writer he remembers the day well as he was a young boy and helped set up planks, etc., to be used at the noon lunch put on by the women of the community. The stores closed downtown and everyone came to help widen and grade the road. His family lived in the house now belonging to the Max DeGroff family. The dirt for the road was hauled from the Bordner pit back of their home.

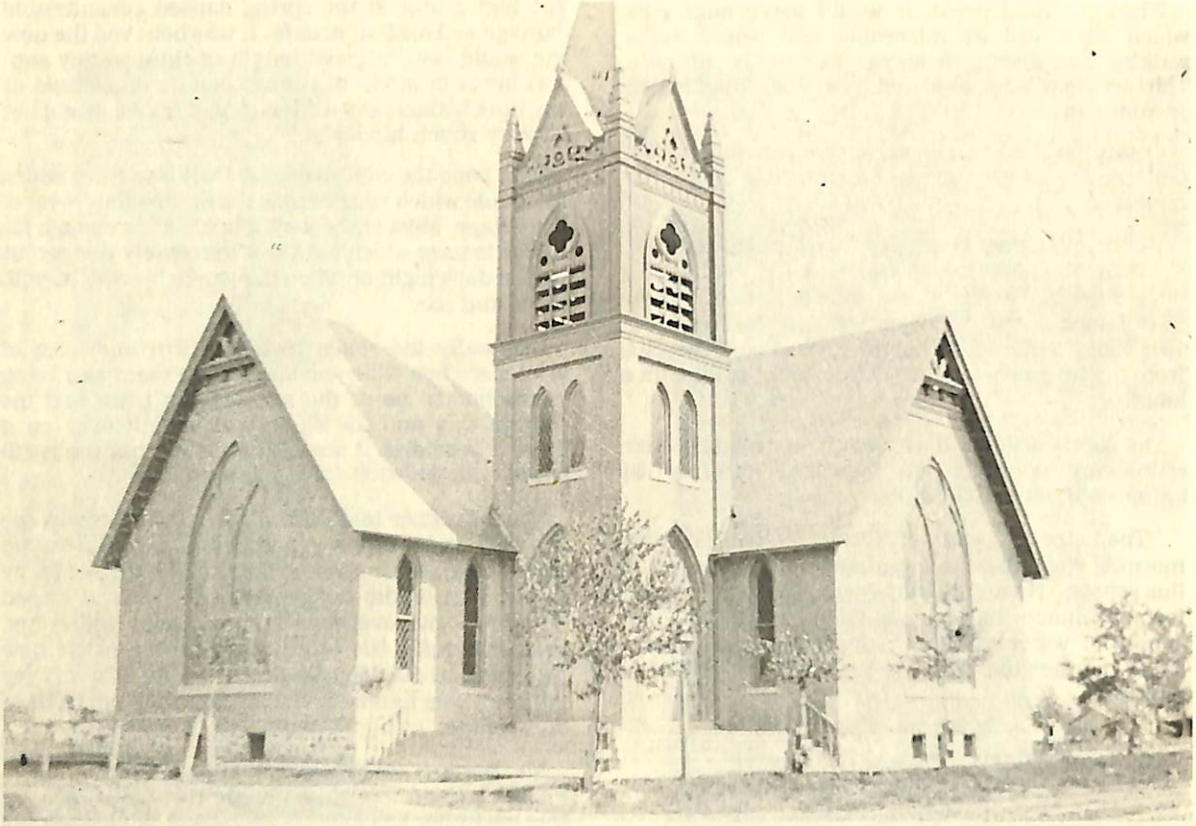
Mr. Bordner told that the pond we know today as Parker's Pond was once used to raise potatoes. He said his father and another man cut a ditch from the swampy area back of their house to the river to let it drain off. Years later the ditch was allowed to grow over and eventually water began to accumulate when it could not get away. Today it is quite a large pond north of town on the west side of the road.

CHURCHES

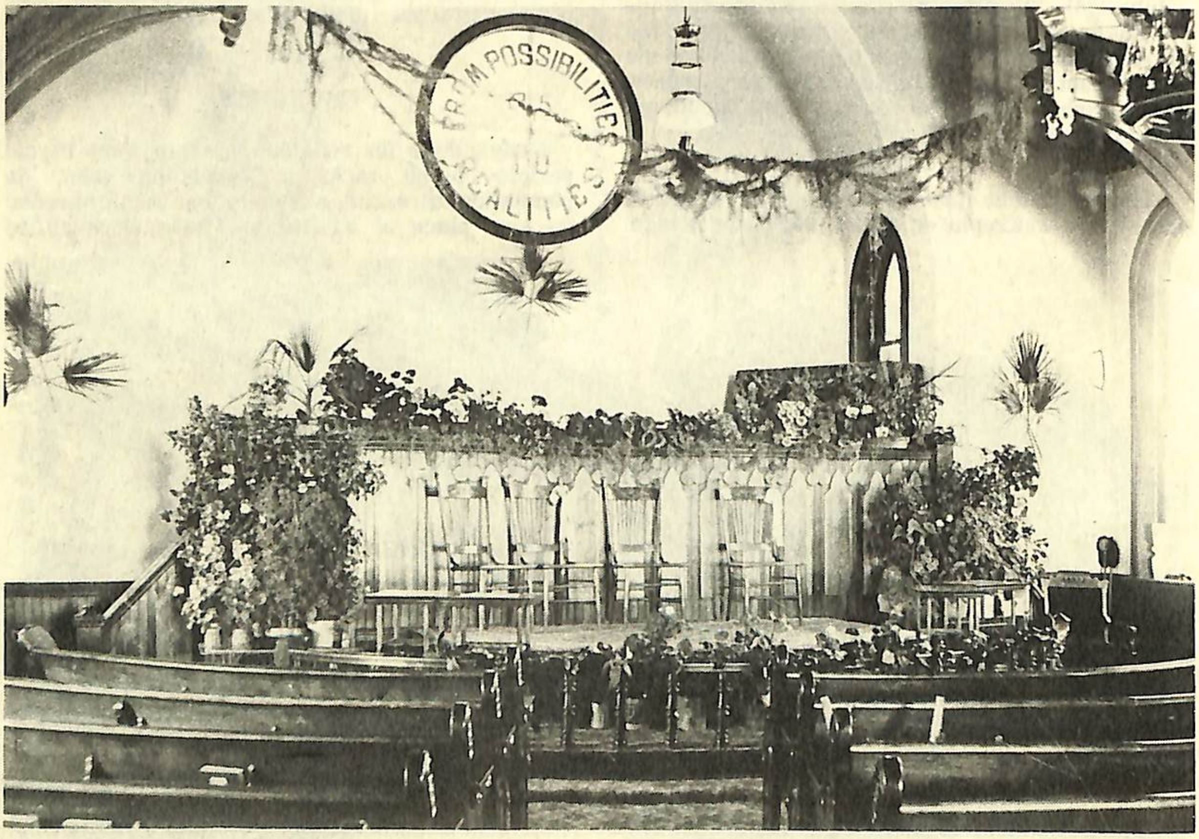
Early places for religious worship were barns, parlors, pulpit rocks or spreading oaks. As population increased, a town or community needed its own place of assembly. These were called



No. 66 — Main Street and Empire. Notice monument in middle of street. Circa 1930's. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Catherine Dunlap.



No. 67 and 68 — Methodist Church built in 1891 on SE corner of Broad and Wayne Streets. Notice hitching posts. Below is inside view. Circa 1895. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.


FROM POSSIBILITIES TO REALITIES

"meeting houses" by early New England Christians.

Originally the beating drum or the flat nasal drawl of the klunk, a kind of horn, would call people to worship. The member who did this was usually paid with a few bushels of corn or a pound of meat from each family in town. When churches were built, they always had a bell which would toll as a reminder that church was about to begin.

Shinn's history states that one of the earliest church buildings in Montpelier was a frame structure erected by the Methodists. It was located on the NW corner of Ohio and Monroe. (See photo No. 23) It was later converted for other uses but when serving as a church building, it was also used as a meeting place for lectures, moral entertainment and political meetings. The voices of many noted men were heard from within its walls. James A. Garfield delivered a political address therein in 1877. Some believe the house now standing there is the original church building and this writer believes it possible when studying the unusual roof.

The United Brethren erected a building in 1869 that was located in the 300 block of South Jonesville Street on the west side. In the early 1890's, the church separated into two organizations with each building a new brick structure. One group built at the NW corner of Broad and Lawrence where they remain today and are known as the Central United Brethren. The other group called themselves the United Brethren and completed their church in 1893 on the NE corner of Jefferson and Empire (now the Nazarene Church). The latter group is now known as the First United Methodist Church and holds services in the new church they dedicated in 1963 located at 1300 East Main Street.

In 1882, it was recorded that no minister resides within the village, but three pulpits are supplied by traveling ministers.

The first Presbyterian Church was organized June 13, 1886 with 7 charter members. The first church was built by W. S. Boon with the dedication in February 1887 (see photo no. 70). Prior to this, the services were held in the Louden Opera House. The church was 30x50 feet in Gothic style with a small front entrance and a spire atop the belfry. Later a full basement was added, then the entry enlarged. The fireside room was added in 1933-34. The original building was torn down in 1961 to make way for the new modern brick building.

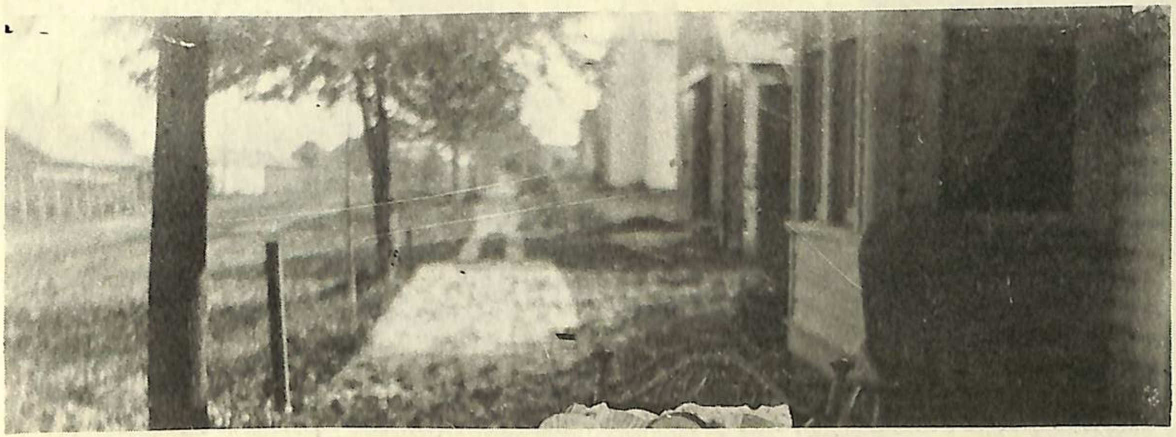
In 1905, the German Lutheran was the oldest church building then in use. It was a frame structure built in 1880. (See photo No. 4) It was bought by the St. Paul's Methodist Church and added to the east side of their church when the Lutherans built a modern brick structure at their same location (SW corner of Broad and Washington) in 1953.

Montpelier presently has eleven churches; six are mentioned above plus the Baptist, Church of Christ, Catholic, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Voice of the Nazarene. The Baptist and Jehovah Witness denominations were both established in the last few years. The Baptists bought the former Grange Building on Brown Road. Mrs. Mae Whetro told this writer that the building was originally the Pleasant Grove Church and stood approximately 5 miles east of Montpelier. The Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall was built last year SE of town on Route 576 across the road from Superior School.

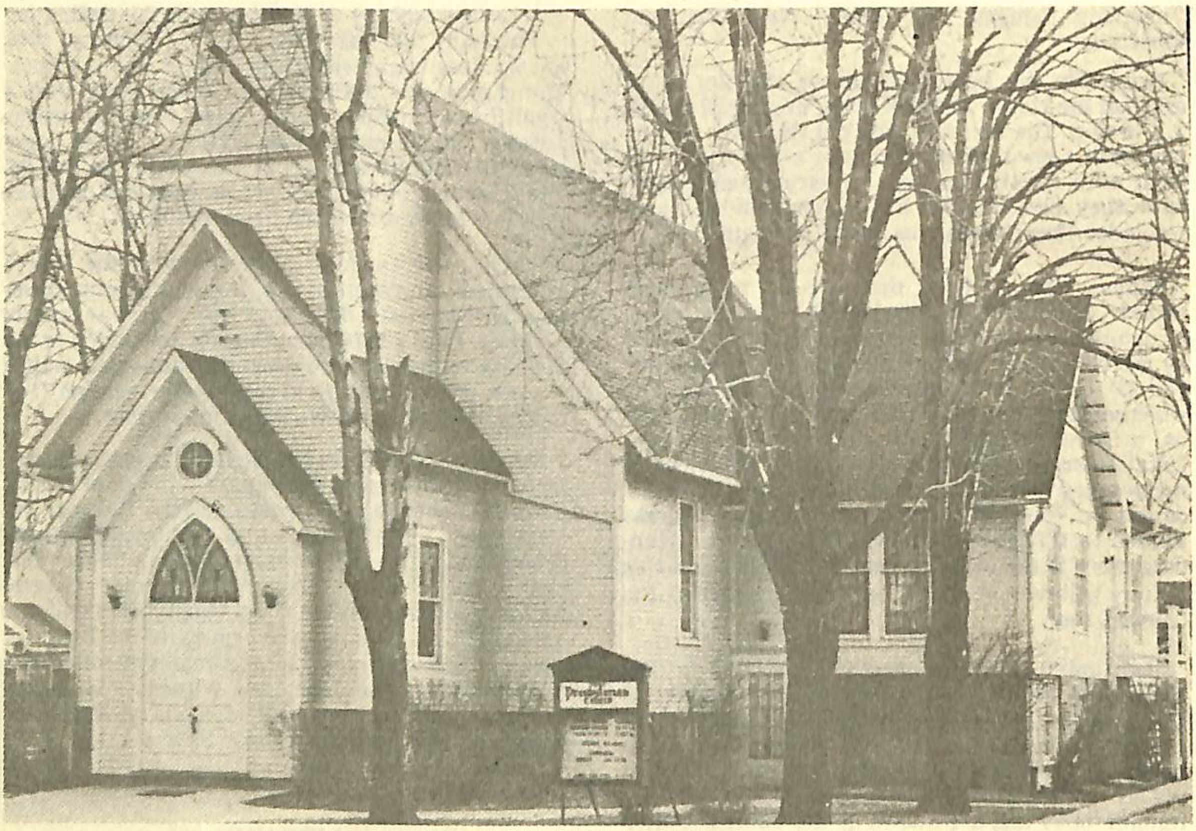
LIBRARY

Montpelier's first attempt at a library was in the early 1880's. The Montpelier Reading Club had a small library of books to loan and in January of 1883 was requesting that books belonging to them be returned without further delay. The club by-laws read "Any person who shall keep a book longer than 2 weeks shall be fined at the rate of 15 cents per week."

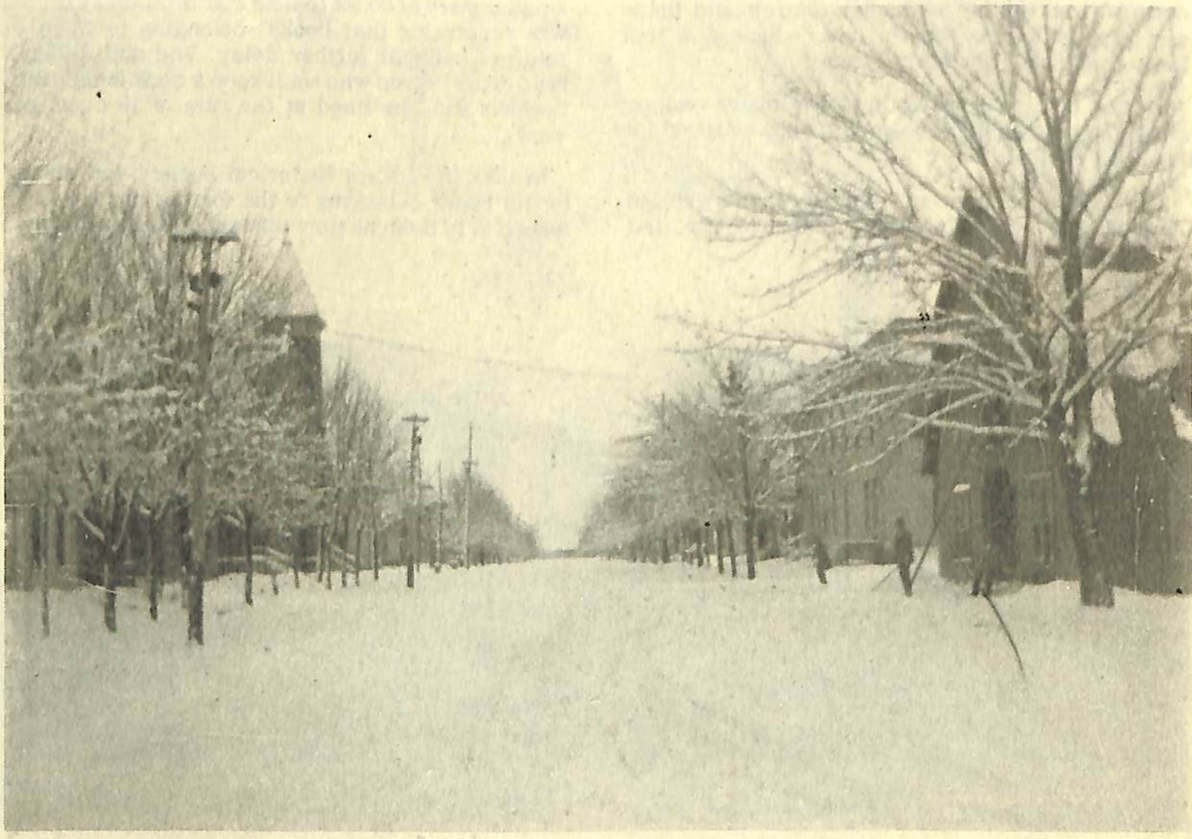
In 1885, the Ladies Historical Society was asking for all books belonging to the former library to be turned in to them as they planned to start a library.



No. 69 — Looking east on Washington Street from Corner of Empire and Washington. Lutheran Church is white building on right in background. Circa 1896. Photo courtesy William Taylor.



No. 70 — Original First Presbyterian Church located next to alley on Washington Street where classrooms of new church are now. 1886-1962. Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Whetro.



No. 71 — Looking south on Empire Street. Livery stable on right next to Lattanner Hotel. First U. B. Church on left. Circa 1895. Photo courtesy William Taylor.

In the early 1920's, a small library was housed in a room in the G.A.R. building downtown. During these years, books were acquired through gifts or donations to buy books.

The first official Montpelier Public Library was opened in 1927 in a room in the high school, but soon had to be moved because of laws stating that if it was a public library, it had to be available to the public. Thus it was moved downtown to the building now occupied by Wermer's Pet Shop. It remained there until the present one was built and dedicated in 1958. It is located at 216 E. Main Street with Mrs. Mae Geesey as head librarian. The building contains a meeting room that can be reserved and used free of charge to any worthy organization or individual approved by the library board.

* * *

It was many years after white settlers appeared before a physician located in the township. In cases of emergency, doctors from Defiance or LaFayette (Pulaski) were called. Dr. A. L. Snyder was the first physician in Montpelier, commencing his practice in June 1854. Five others followed for short periods of time. In July, 1859, Dr. Isaiah M. Snyder moved here from West Unity and formed a partnership with the above mentioned Dr. Snyder. They were not related and only continued their partnership for about a year when Dr. A. L. Snyder moved to Bryan. Dr. I. M. Snyder became one of the most successful practitioners of medicine and surgery in Williams County and was also the most extensive property owner in Montpelier. He was a very outspoken man, thus was not the favorite personality of many but no one could disclaim his ability as a doctor. With the exception of one year, he spent the remainder of his life in Montpelier. Aside from his medical duties, he enjoyed life along the St. Joe, but with caution. Aug. 5, 1881 - "Dr. Snyder purchased a life preserver when in Chicago recently which furnishes considerable amusement for the bathers in the St. Joe."

The first lawyer in Montpelier was George Strayer who opened his office in about 1880. He soon became prosecuting attorney of the county. Two others followed, for short periods of time only, as there wasn't sufficient business to sustain a lawyer.

* * *

Sports enthusiasts, without the benefit of modern day TV, idled away the hours in numerous ways.

"Sundays appear to be the very best days for some of our people to engage in fishing. Last Sabbath the banks of the St. Joe were lined with anglers catching the finny tribe. Leonard Merry captured an 8 lb. pike in the St. Joe last Monday. He says his greatest hindrance is the turtles, which are abundant, and steal bait from the hook."

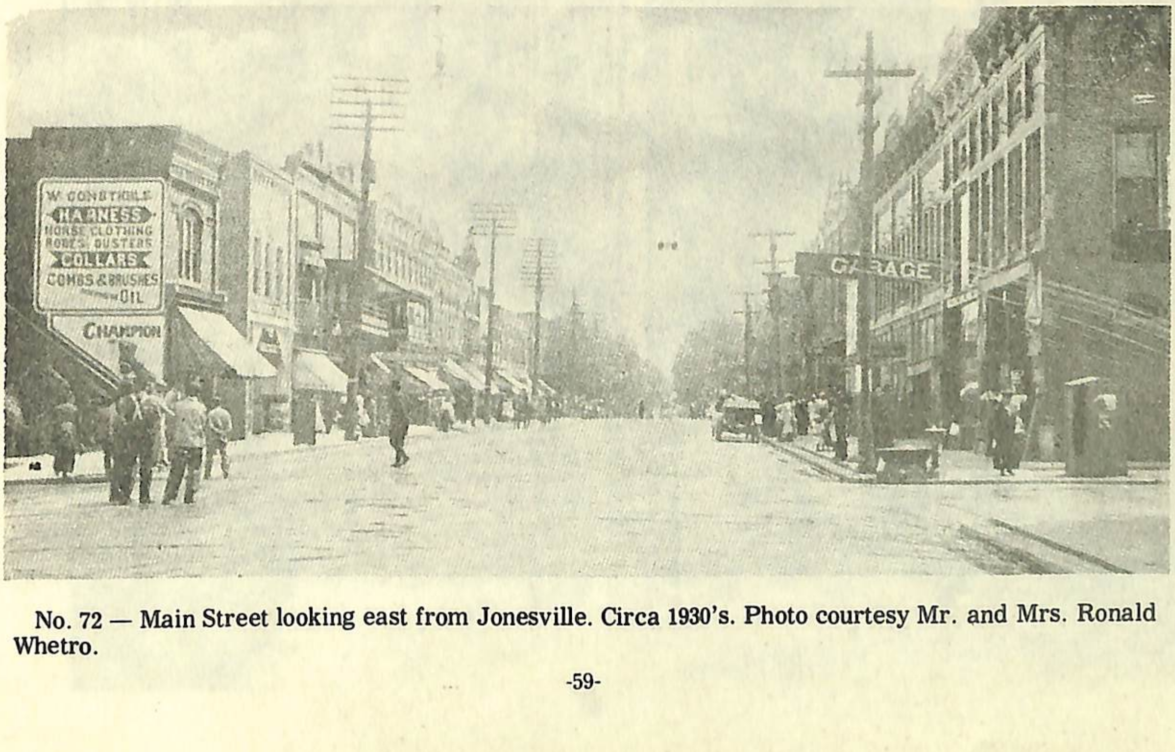
"Some of the inhabitants of South Montpelier indulge in the game of quoits for their Sunday pastime." (Quoits was similar to horseshoes except played with a flattened iron ring and thrown from 18 yards to a hob an inch high).

Ball was played east of the Gratz Mill, among other places. The first ball team was organized in June of 1882 and known as the Montpelier Comets. At that time, everyone was anxiously awaiting a comet to be visible in the sky.

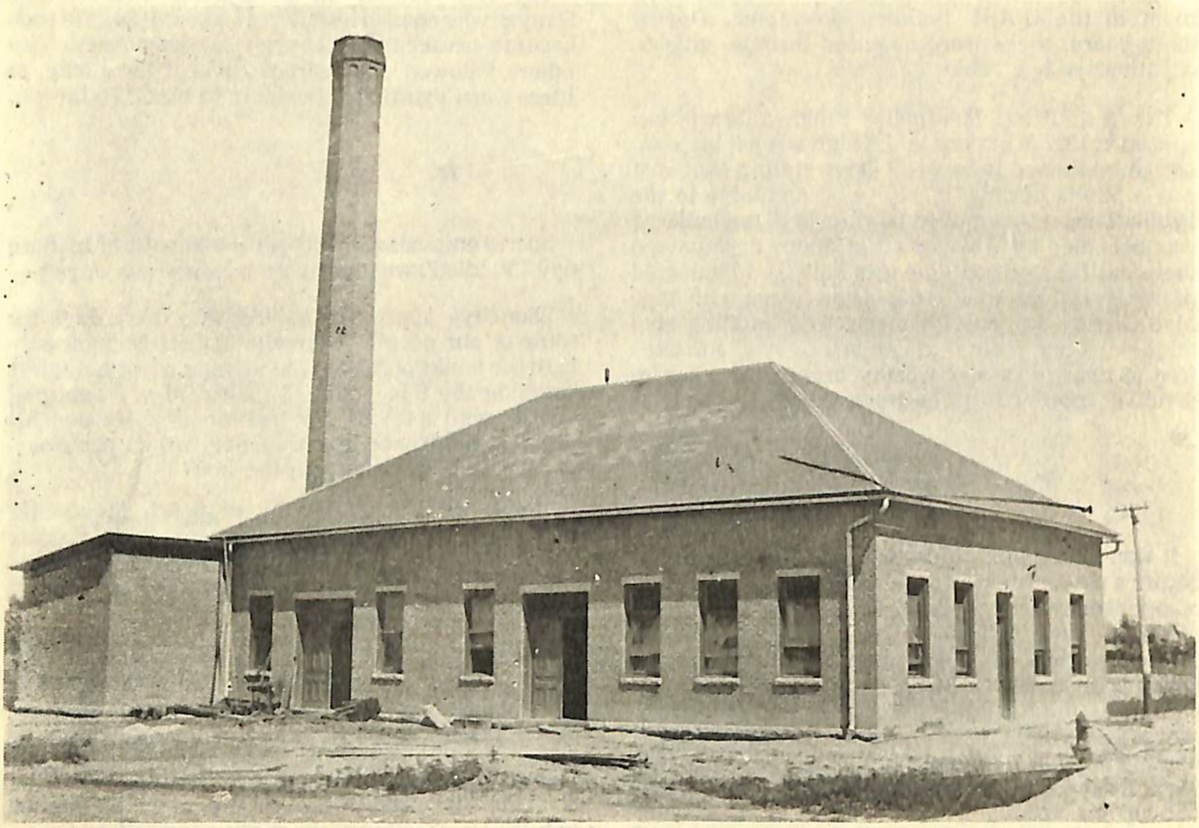
"After the family dinner, the male persuation indulged in shooting at the mark as a pastime."

And in the winter, sleigh ride parties and ice skating were very much in fashion and a source of enjoyment to both sexes.

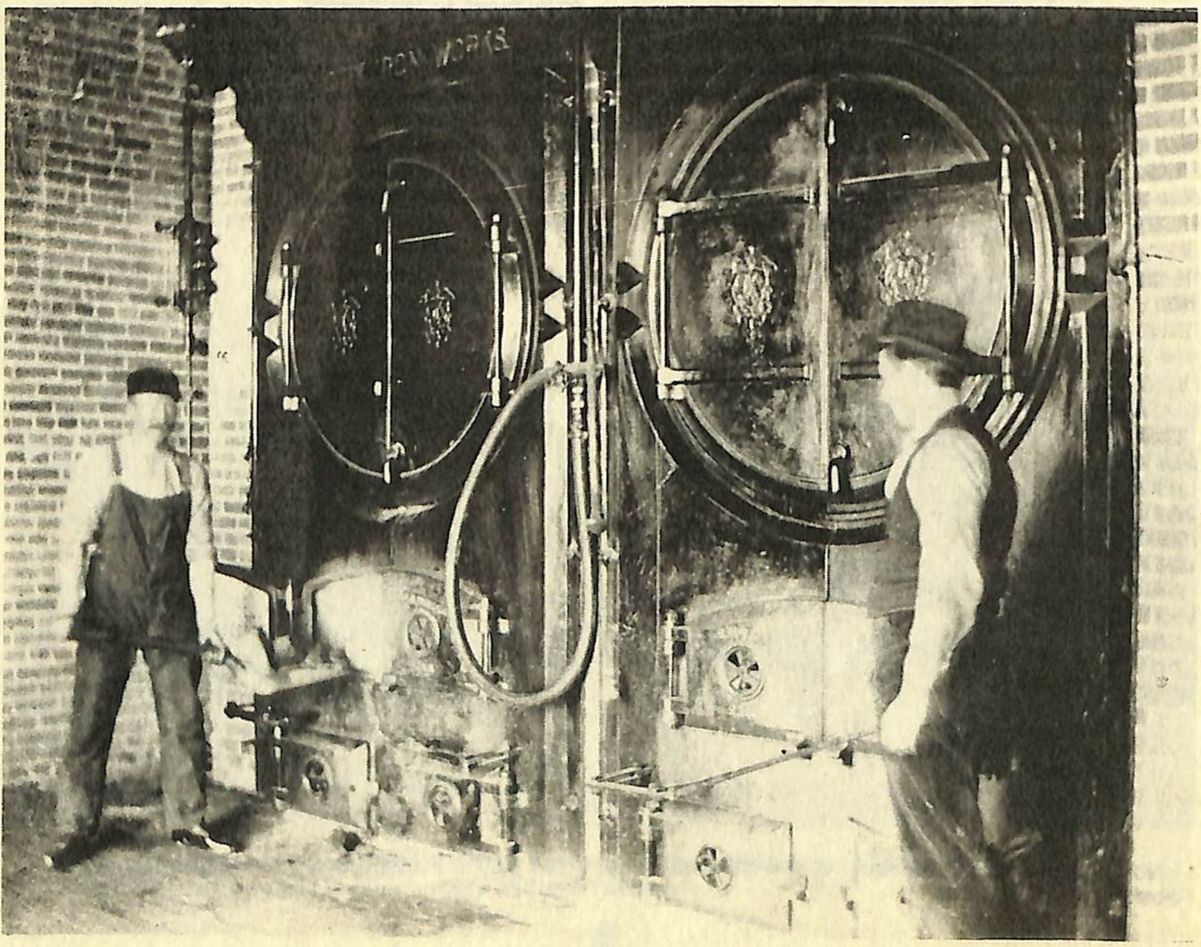
There were also the inevitable dog or cock fights, now illegal, that were much in fashion in early years of Montpelier. Feb. 2, 1883 - "Dog fight to be held in village soon. Owners of the dogs living in Montpelier and Fayette. Lovers of such carniverous brutality are anxiously awaiting to see the 'fun'." (Dr. Snyder owned fighting cocks).



No. 72 — Main Street looking east from Jonesville. Circa 1930's. Photo courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Whetro.



No. 73 and 74 — Montpelier Water Works plant when nearly finished in 1895. Smoke stack on north side. Furnaces below were in plant. The boilers were hand fired to make steam to run the engine that generated the electricity. Men unidentified. Photo courtesy of William Taylor.



Along the musical line - June, 1883 - "Cornets and mouth organs are the popular musical instruments of the day. Almost any evening music can be heard emanating from them in different parts of the village to the satisfaction of some and the disgust of others."

And there were always the practical jokers - "The person who tied a rope to a pail, containing a tin can and a brick setting at the head of the stairs and to the knob of the parlor door at the Globe Hotel last Sunday evening thereby waking every person in the house about midnight, was guilty of a mean trick in more ways than one."

In 1883, the latest Ohio slang was "come off your perch."

★ ★ ★

Village voters approved the proposal of electric lights and a water works in April, 1895. Wires were installed in the business establishments and after 5 or 6 prominent homeowners decided to have wires strung for their homes, numerous others followed suit. July 11, 1895 - "City well being put down."

October 10, 1895 - "Smoke stack of the power house is rising heavenward and thus goes the water works plant progress though slowly." (See photo no. 73).

Dec. 19, 1895 - "And the people of Montpelier said, "Let there be light" and there was light--electric light. At six o'clock p.m. last Saturday the light from 30 arc lamps flashed out brilliantly and there was an exclamation of joy and delight from 2,500 thankful people. The circuit was complete and when the switch was open for the first time, there was abundant proof that the electricians had done their work well and in a scientific manner. Since Saturday night, we have had plenty of good light and everything is working well. The incandescent lamps (street lights) will be ready for use this evening."

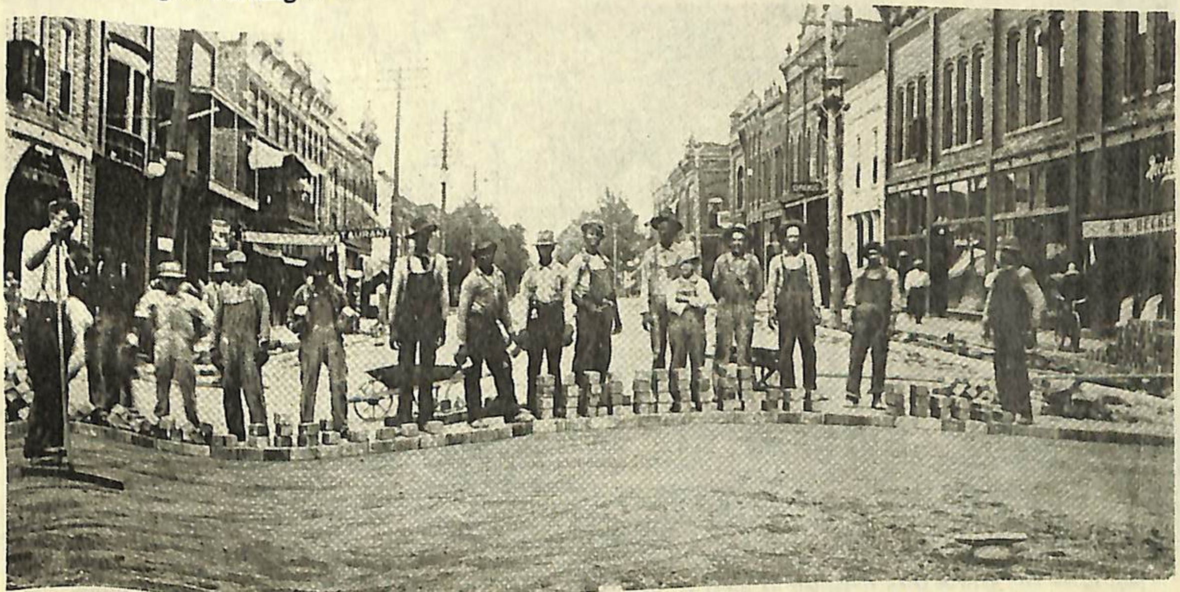
They, of course, were not without problems as a pipe broke causing all lights to go out but the villagers were reminded that this only showed how wonderful they are and that they would be truly missed if without them. January 2, 1896 - "Be patient--electric lights and water works will run all right in due time."

★ ★ ★

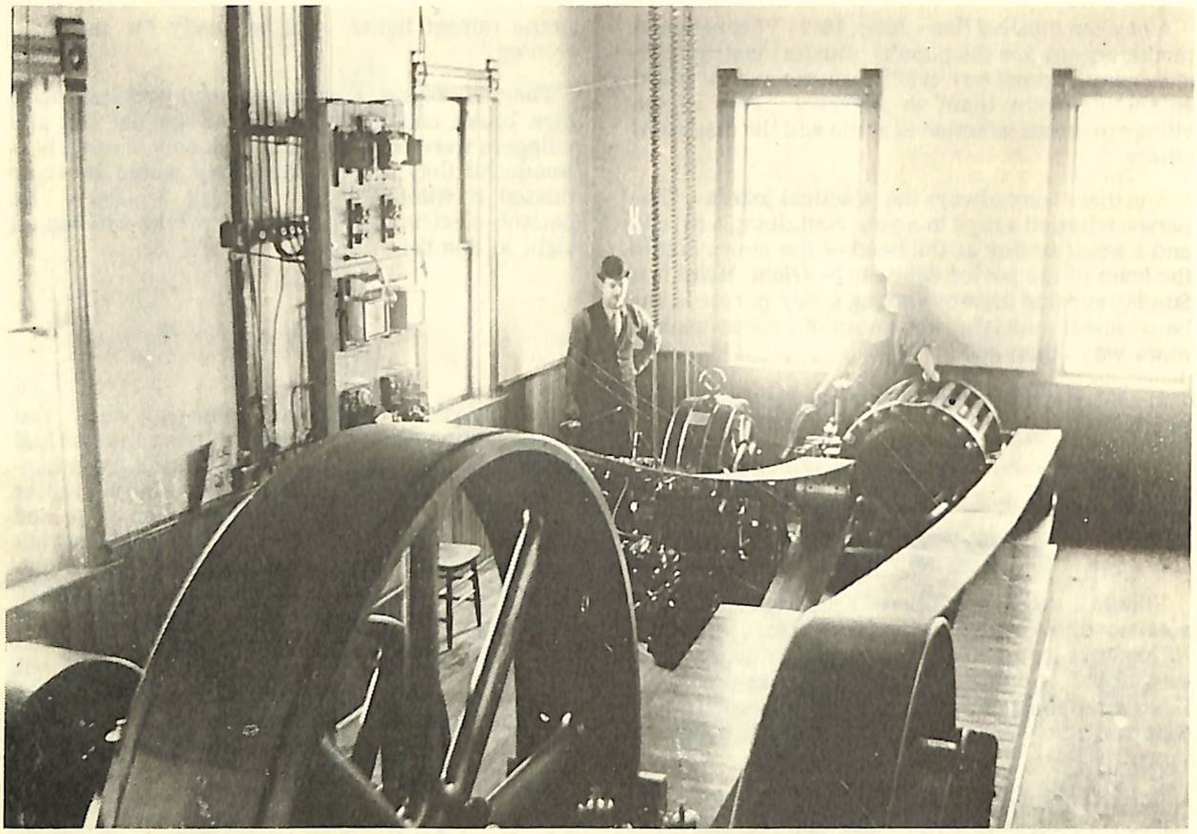
In early years, citizens had their own wells. You had to pump your own water and every kitchen had a water pail with a tin cup beside it or a long handled drinking cup in it. Clela Bible told this writer that she remembers when Montpelier first had water. It wasn't piped into the homes at first but everyone thought it was wonderful to just go outdoors to a faucet and get all the water you wanted. (See photo No. 50) Before the water tower was erected in 1939, Montpelier's water supply was stored in the standpipe next to the smoke stack at the water works plant. It is a tall thin metal structure and still used to store water but for a different purpose. Montpelier has four wells that supply water today.

★ ★ ★

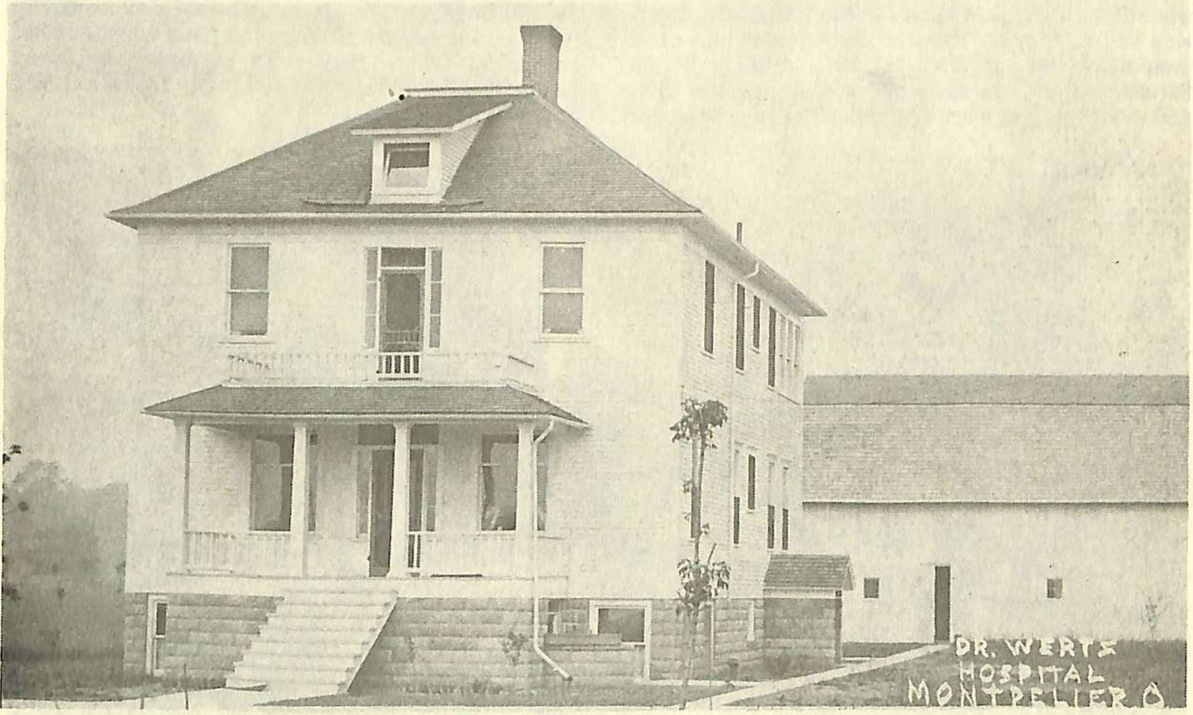
In the early 1900's, many Montpelier citizens raised chickens. This story was told the writer by Mrs. Elva Tedrow, about a horse owned by Truman Spangler. (Mr. Spangler owned and operated a feed store located where the Dean Building now stands at 131 W. Main Street.) He would deliver feed around town and if he forgot when it was noon, his horse certainly didn't. When the noon whistle blew, no matter where they were in town, the horse headed for the store to eat and many times left Mr. Spangler stranded.



No. 75 — Paving Main Street with brick. Circa 1911. Photo courtesy Howard Wilson.



No. 76 — First steam generator in water works plant. Men unidentified. Floor now is half way up windows. Circa 1895. Photo courtesy William Taylor.



No. 77 — Dr. Wertz first hospital located at 314 N. Pleasant. His office was through a door under the front porch on the right. Top burned off and it is now the residence of the Harry Van Wye family. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Alice Ward.

The first telephone in use in the village was reputed to be a private line from the T. L. Dunlap home, where the high school now stands, to the Lowery store at the corner of Main and Jonesville, now Montgomery Wards. The council granted the Union Telephone Company the right to erect and maintain its poles and lines in the village in May, 1897.

Main and Empire Streets were paved with brick in 1911. (See photo no. 75)

William Gause, who built the hotel known as the Smith House, had the first cement sidewalk so it is told.

Montpelier was the first to use asphalt paving in Williams County. Jonesville, Washington, Broad, North Monroe, Court and East Avenue were paved with asphalt in 1916-17.

In August, 1946, Main Street was improved with a thick, smooth layer of asphalt. The work was done by the State of Ohio and the town shared the expense with $6,000 their cost. Monroe Street from Main to the north river bridge was resurfaced at the same time.

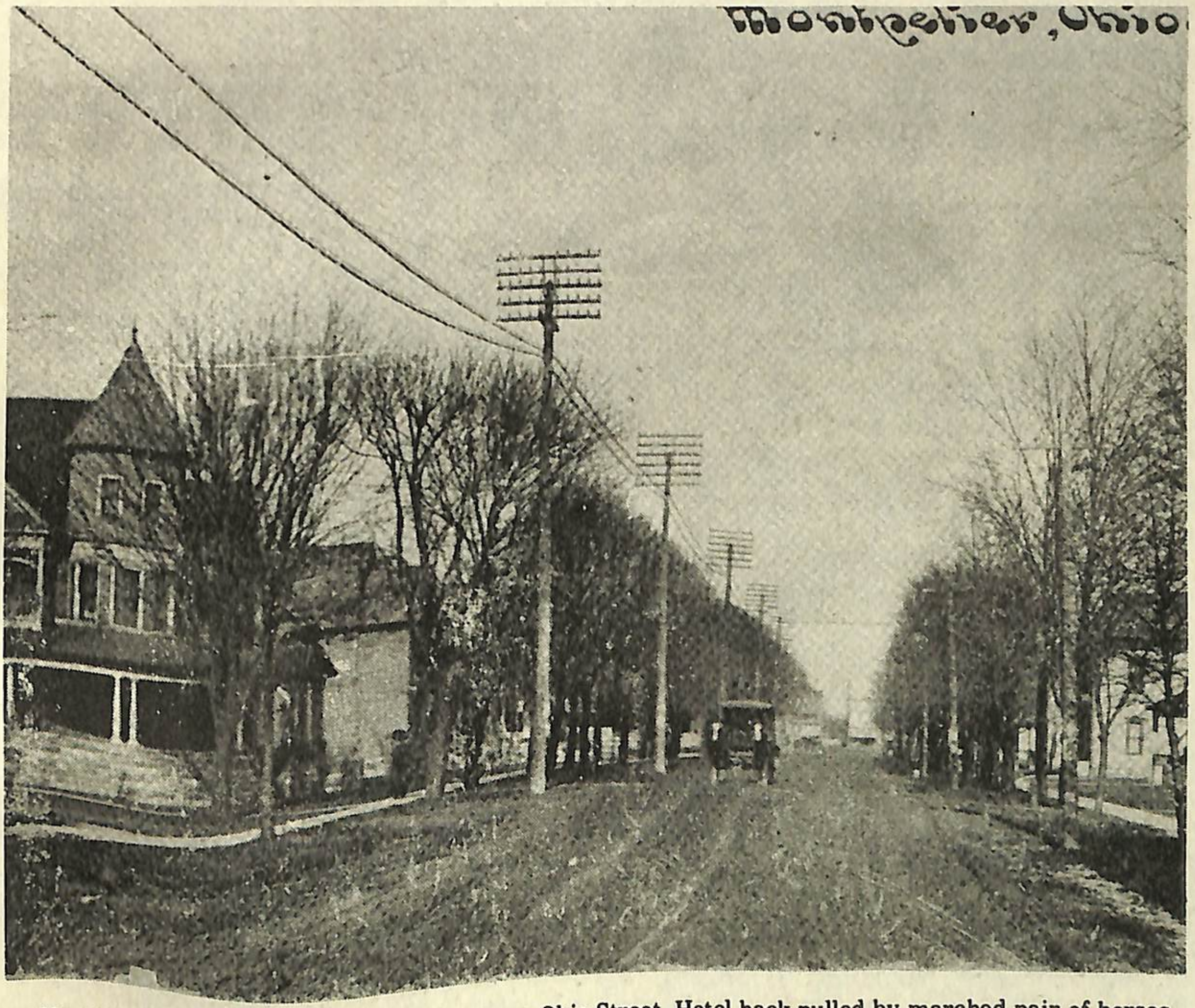
The State Highway Barn on East Main Street was erected in 1939. It is presently the headquarters for driver license tests held once a week for the county.

Montpelier has had several hospitals over the years. Dr. Wertz's first hospital was located at 314 N. Pleasant. (See photo no. 77). It partially burned and was made into a one story home which is now owned by the Harry Van Wye family. Dr. Wertz's second hospital is now a residence at 315 Empire Street.

The Wilson Geesey Funeral Home (335 Empire Street) originally built as a residence by W. S. Boone was once the Hogue Hospital. (See photo No. 78)

A modern one-story brick structure was dedicated in June 1952 and known as the Williams County General Hospital. It is located at the north end of Lincoln Avenue. A wing was added to the north which houses the Williams County Board of Health offices.

In recent years a medical center was built south of the hospital on the east side of Lincoln Avenue. Construction is presently underway for a doctor's building to be known as the Rivera Building and named after its promoter, Dr. Lenin Rivera.



No. 78 — Empire Street looking north from Ohio Street. Hotel hack pulled by marched pair of horses coming down the street. Circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Keith Porter.

Montpelier is justly proud of the many fine citizens associated with the town whether it be by birth or other circumstances that brought them here. Each is important to the community and who is to say which deserves special recognition. Several have gained national fame and need little introduction but are mentioned here merely to let future generations know from whence they came

Dr. Paul Allman Siple

Dr. Paul Allman Siple was born December 18, 1908 at 410 Empire Street in Montpelier. His family moved to Erie, Pennsylvania after Paul completed the seventh grade. At age 19, he was chosen from more than 60,000 Boy Scouts to go on the first Byrd expedition to the Antarctic. He later spent 4 summers and 10 winters on the polar continent and was recognized throughout the world as the foremost authority on the South Pole region. Although primarily known as an explorer, Dr. Siple was also author, inventor, seismic expert and physical geographer. In 1968, at the time of his death due to a heart attack, he was special scientific advisor to the office of the Chief of Research in the Department of the Army. He was married and the father of three daughters. As part of the bicentennial celebration, a large stone will be permanently placed on the townhall lawn inscribed with his name and a short history. A special ceremony, ending the week's activities, will be held to dedicate the memorial.

Elinor Kiess Rose

Elinor Kiess Rose is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. D. T. Kiess. Mr. Kiess was the local jeweler for years in Montpelier. Mrs. Rose has had three books published and has been writing a daily light verse quatrain feature for daily newspapers for the last 23 years. She is a professional speaker, her name has appeared in editions of Who's Who of American Women and she has received a Writer of the Year award, just to mention a few honors to her credit. She now resides in Royal Oak, Michigan. Following is a sample of her work that appears daily in the newspaper under the title "Sugar and Spice" courtesy of Allied Features Syndicate.

Complex Unisex

The changes in the world today
Confuse him, he reveals:
His daughters play on hockey teams,
And Junior wears high heels.

Fred Bauer

Fred Bauer was born in Montpelier on March 30, 1934. He began writing for our local Leader Enterprise newspaper when he was 15 years old. After high school, he studied journalism at Bowling Green State University. He spent time in the army in Hawaii followed by more newspaper reporting and editing and two years of radio broadcasting. He joined the Guideposts Magazine and served as managing editor for four years before resigning to concentrate on books. Since 1967, he has written, edited or contributed to more than a dozen books. Among them are "How Many Hills to Hillsboro?", about his family's bicycle trip across America; "EV: The Man and His Words", about the late Senator Everett Dirksen; "Then Sings My Soul with George Beverly Shea"; "Putting It All Together" with Brooks Robinson, the ball player and a book of poetry entitled "For Rainy Mondays and Other Dry Spells." Presently he is editor of Guideposts Books in New York City and busy writing and filling speaking engagements. He is married and the father of four children. They make their home in Princeton, New Jersey. Following is a selection from his latest book--copyright 1973 by Fred Bauer. Published by Prometheus Press. Used by permission.

freedom is a barefoot boy

freedom is a barefoot boy without his shirt
  a fishing pole a can of worms a little dirt
it's a pixie in pigtails who has time to see
  the beauty of a bluebird the budding of a tree

★ ★ ★

Montpelier's 100th birthday was celebrated 5 years late due to World War II, but held in real style in the summer of 1950. This years affair will be held the week of July 18-24 as our part of the country's bicentennial celebration and also to commemorate the 131st year since Montpelier was platted. All the nation is decked out in red, white and blue with each community "doing its own thing." Montpelier was the first town in Williams County to be named as an official Bicentennial community by the U.S. government.

Our celebration will include an ox roast followed by an old-fashioned combined church service at the fairgrounds. During the week there will be a railroad day, industrial open house bus tour, Paul Siple old homes tour, children's fair, senior citizens day, flea market-antique collectors day and St. Joe river day. City Band and Community Chorus concerts, beard and period dress contests and an arts and crafts working display around the townhall, called "Isles of Smiles" will also be included. This will all be in conjunction with the annual bean day parade and Miss Montpelier queen contest complete with a street dance in the evening. Montpelier's annual parade gets its name from the fact that the merchants serve free beans from 5-6 in the evening during their sidewalk sale event. All available window space downtown will be used to display products of industry and memorabilia of Montpelier and early days. The week will end with the dedication of the Paul Siple stone. A time capsule with 1976 memorabilia will be put in cement, in front of the stone, to be opened in 2076, one hundred years hence.

AMERICAN REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL
1776-1976

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